MARS

13

by Fuyumi Soryo

TOKYOPOP

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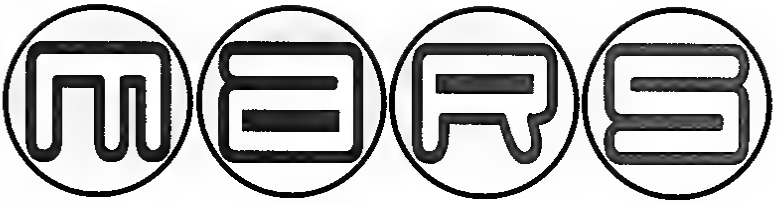

Volume 13

By Fuyumi Soryo

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MARS

WHY WAS THE DOCTOR THERE...?

YOUR MOTHER DIED OF LEUKEMIA.

HEY AUNTIE, WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR MOTHER? HOW DID SHE DIE?

LEGEND OF MARS

The story until now...

Kira was spellbound by Rei when he kissed a statue of Mars in the art studio. They began dating, and after living together, they decided they want to get married. But in Kira's defense, Rei assaults Kira's stepfather, and Rei is faced with attempted murder charges. He goes to his controlling father, who takes care of the situation. But Mr. Kashino's help was only under the condition that Rei go back to school and quit riding motorcycles! Kira's mother gives them their blessing, and Kira is back by Rei's side...The engaged couple is invited to Rei's father's house, where Kira discovers Rei's dead twin's last suicide note hidden in one of his paintings. The sad and bitter truth of Sei's suicide unfolds while Rei's distant memories of his mother slowly begin to come back...

Rei Kashino
A high school student who races motorcycles. He has proposed to Kira. After reconciling with his father Rei moves back home.

Sei Kashino
Rei's twin brother who committed suicide when he was in junior high school

Kira Ase
She was raped by her stepfather during junior high. Right after she and Rei decide to get married, her stepfather comes to get her...

Rei's father
He's the president of a company called The O&K Group. He is not Rei's biological father

WHAT KIND OF TREATMENT WAS MY MOTHER GETTING?

WHAT WAS SHE LIKE BEFORE SHE GOT SICK?

NOW THAT I KNOW MY MOTHER DIED OF AN ILLNESS...

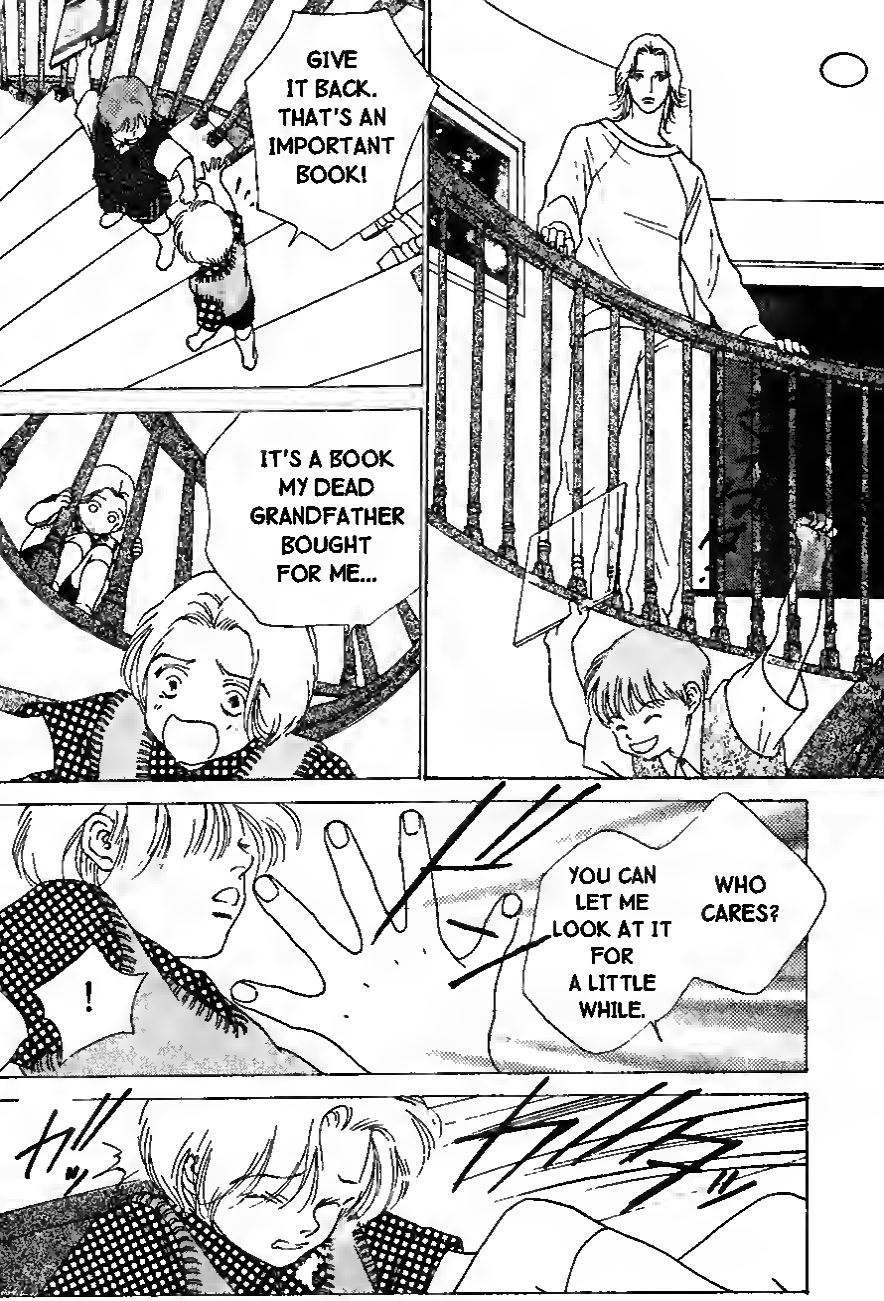
...WHERE WAS THAT HOSPITAL ROOM?

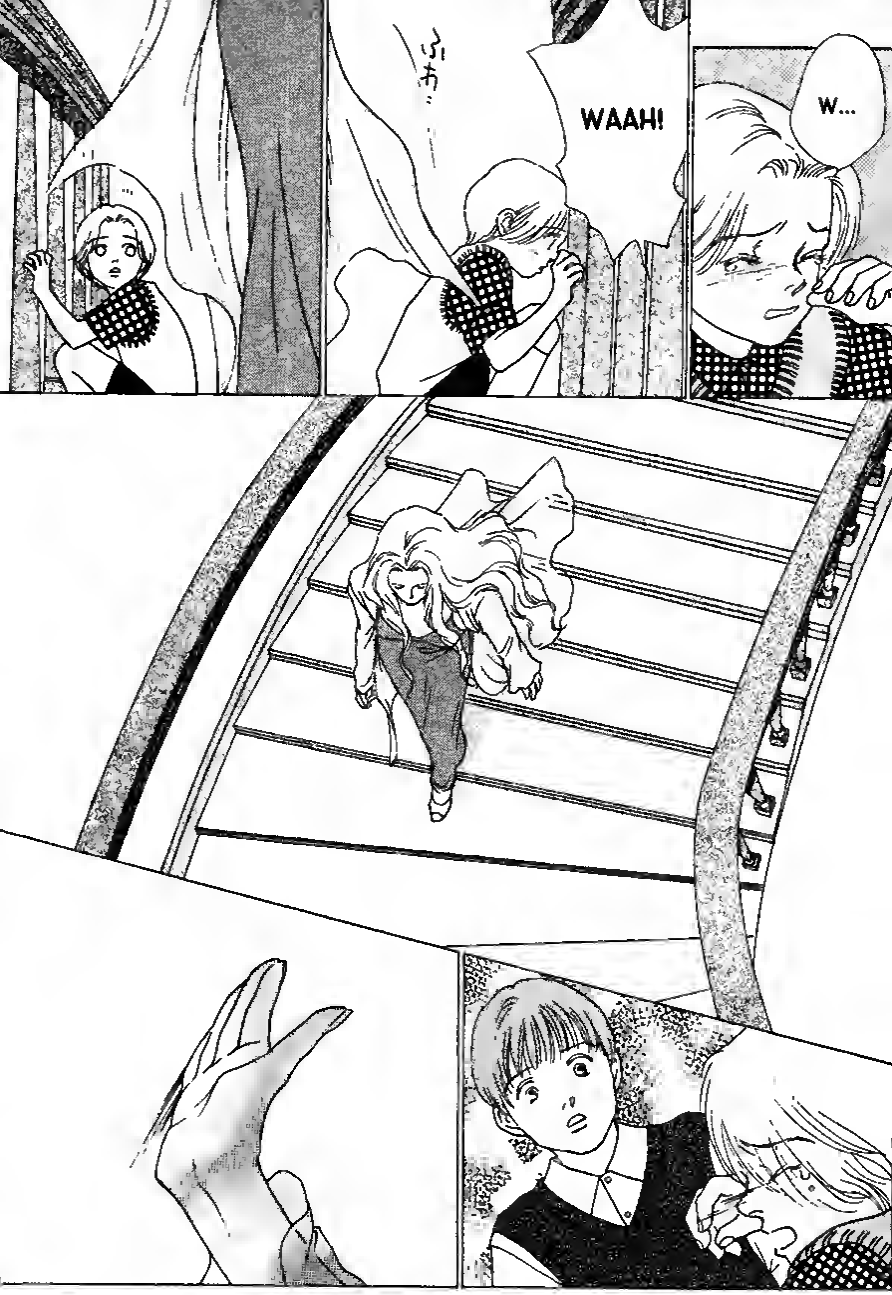
WHICH HOSPITAL WAS IT?

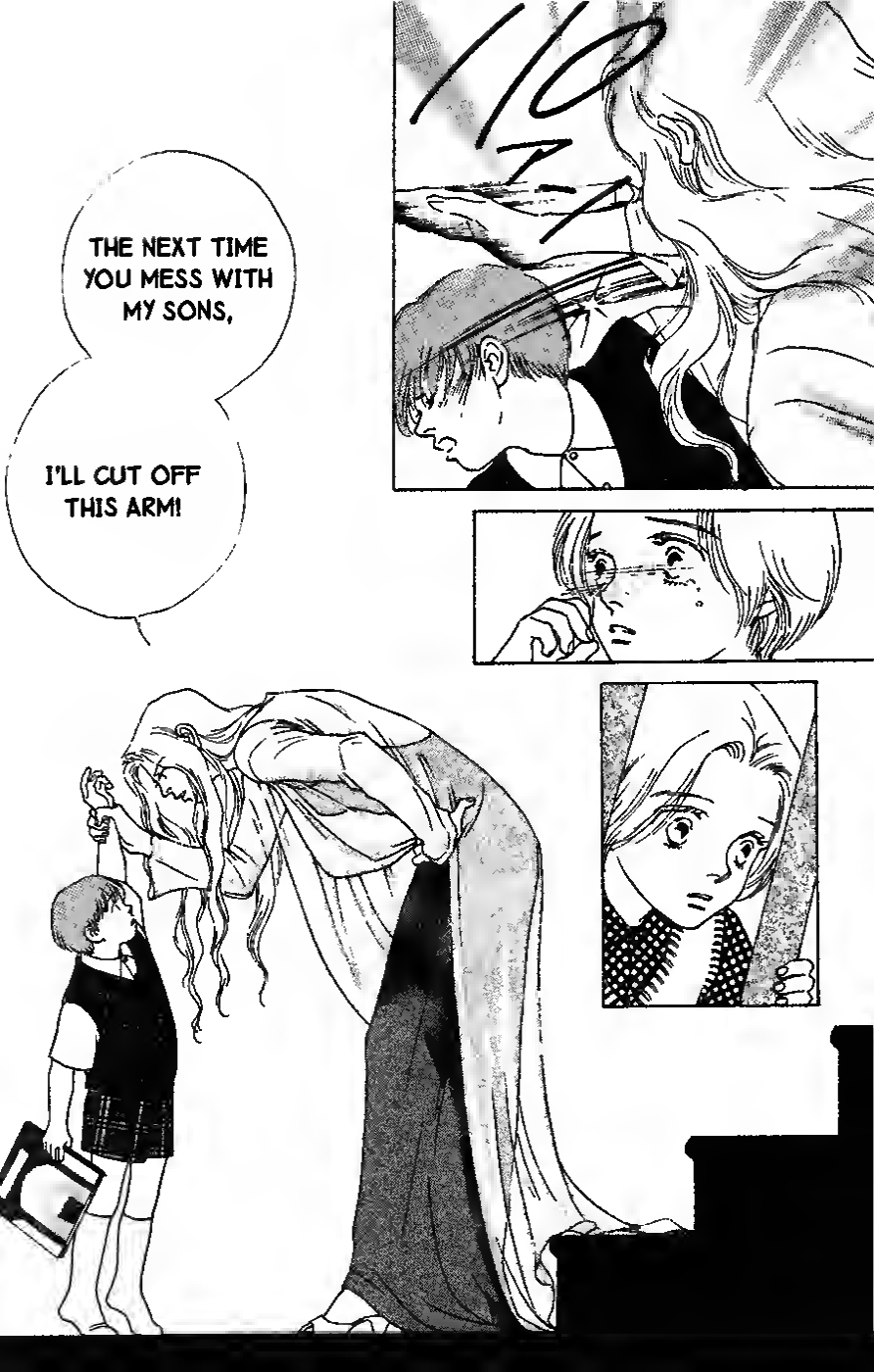
WHY WAS THE DOCTOR FROM THE PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL THERE?

WHAT KIND...

...OF PERSON WAS MY MOTHER?


GIVE IT BACK. THAT'S AN IMPORTANT BOOK!
IT'S A BOOK MY DEAD GRANDFATHER BOUGHT FOR ME...
YOU CAN LET ME LOOK AT IT FOR A LITTLE WHILE.
WHO CARES?
!


W...
WAAH!


THE NEXT TIME YOU MESS WITH MY SONS,
I'LL CUT OFF THIS ARM!

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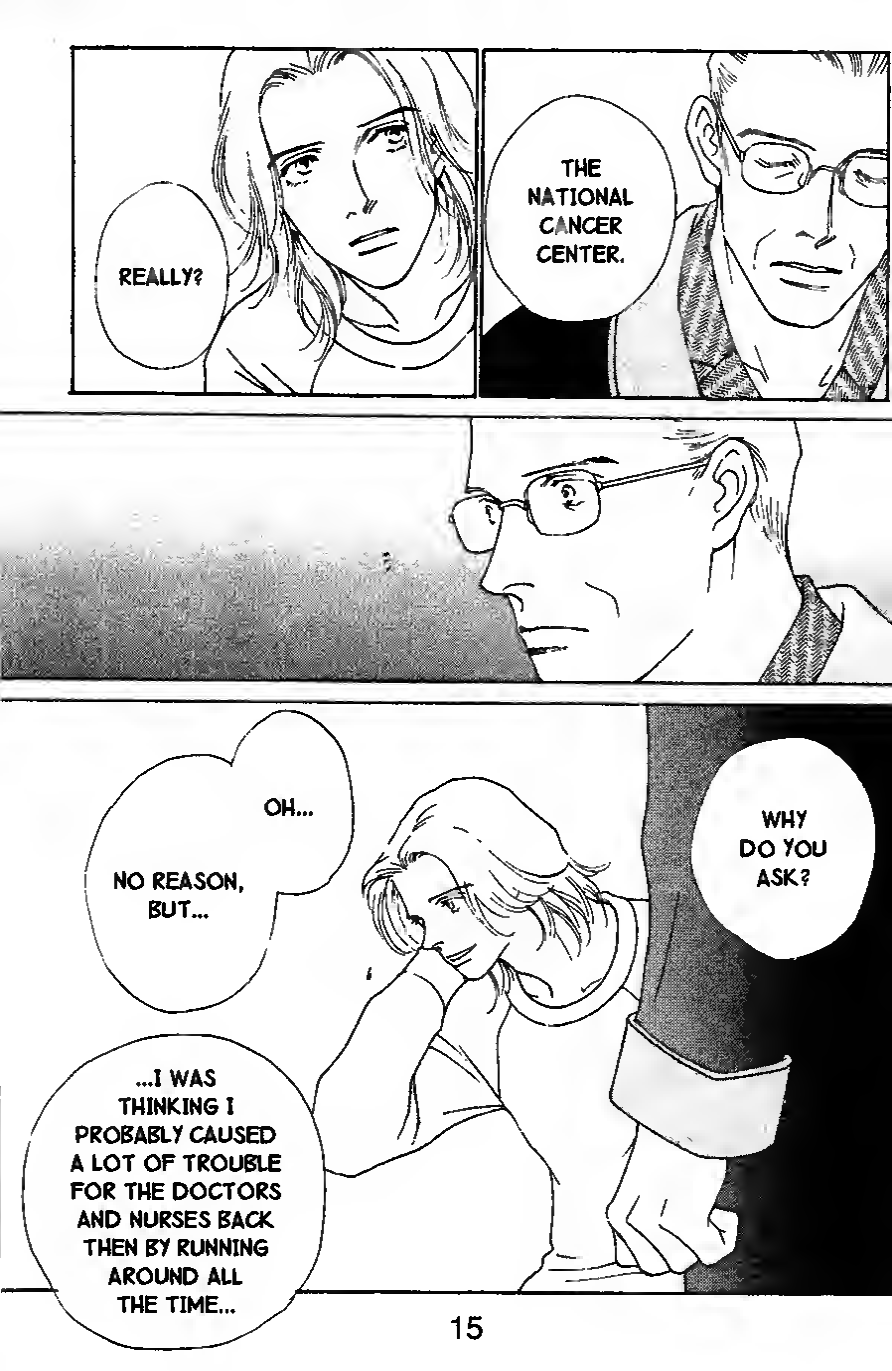
ぎゃあああ

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

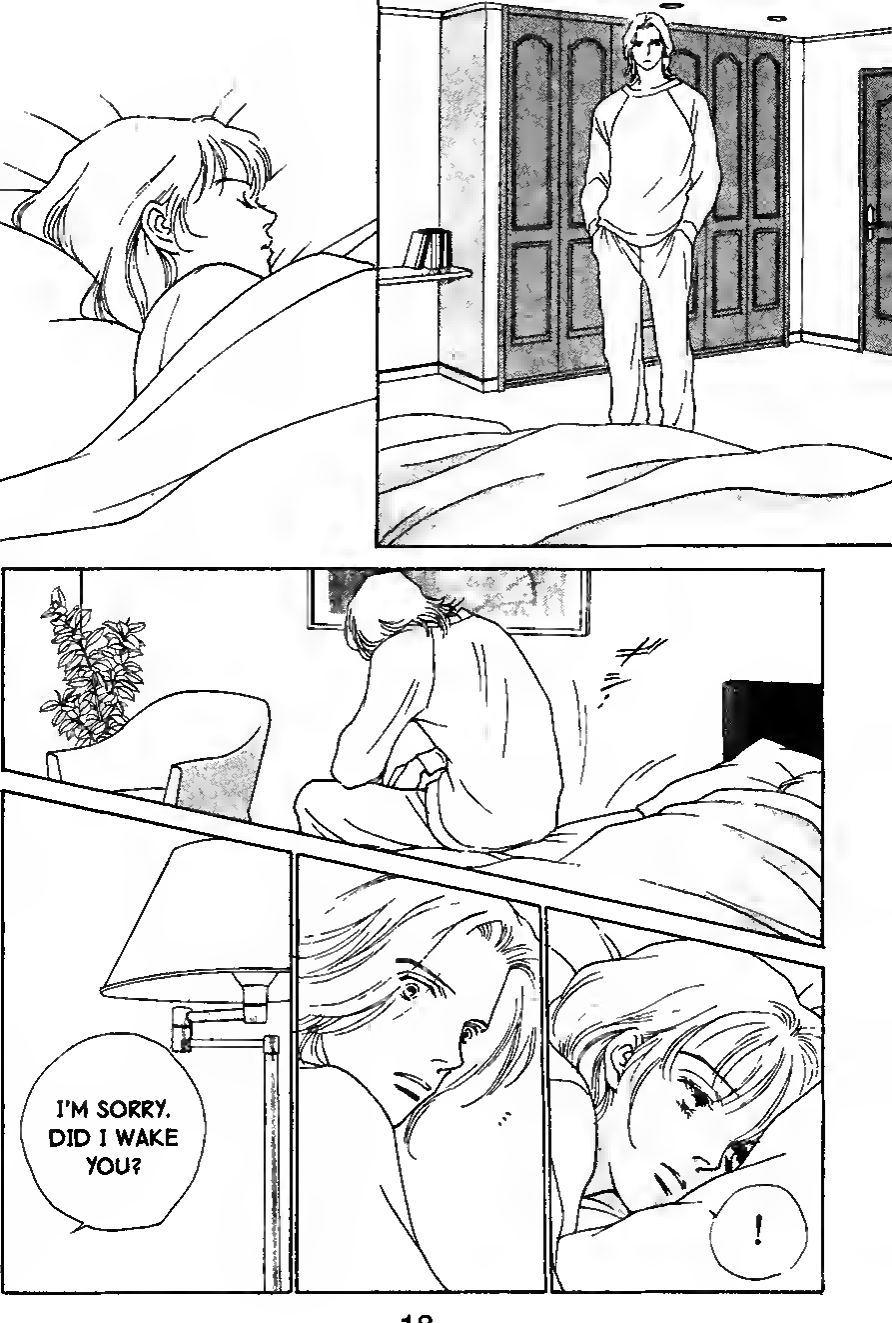
WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE? DO YOU KNOW WHAT TIME IT IS?
OH...
A LOT OF THINGS HAVE HAPPENED THESE PAST YEARS...
I GUESS IT'S TO BE EXPECTED.
UM... ALL THESE MEMORIES STARTED COMING BACK TO ME AFTER BEING IN MY MOTHER'S ROOM.
I JUST COULDN'T SLEEP...

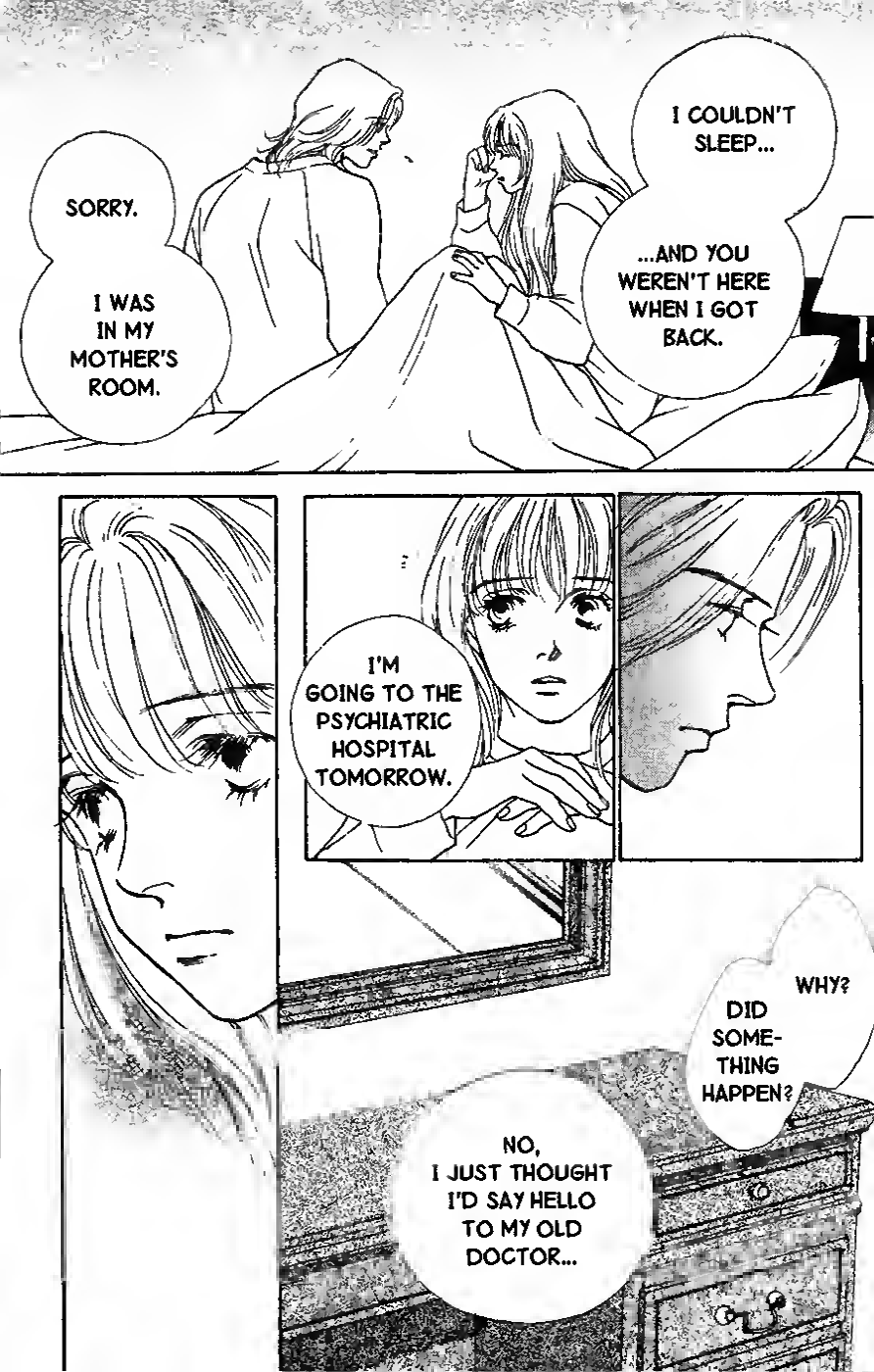
HEY, HOW DID MY MOTHER DIE AGAIN?
...
IF YOU WANT, WE COULD GO VISIT HER GRAVE SOMETIME.
YEAH... THAT'S RIGHT.
WE USED TO VISIT HER IN THE HOSPITAL EVERY WEEK.
SHOKO HAD ACUTE LEUKEMIA...
DIDN'T I TELL YOU?
BY THE WAY, WHAT WAS THE NAME OF THE HOSPITAL?


REALLY?
THE NATIONAL CANCER CENTER.
OH...
NO REASON, BUT...
WHY DO YOU ASK?
...I WAS THINKING I PROBABLY CAUSED A LOT OF TROUBLE FOR THE DOCTORS AND NURSES BACK THEN BY RUNNING AROUND ALL THE TIME...

MAYBE I'LL STOP BY AFTER GOING TO THE CEMETERY...
IS THAT ALL RIGHT?
YEAH, BUT...
IT'S BEEN SO LONG,
I'M SURE THEY'RE NOT THE SAME DOCTORS AND NURSES ANYMORE...
THAT'S TRUE...

GOOD NIGHT.
IT WAS JUST A THOUGHT.
WELL, IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL.
.....
カチャ

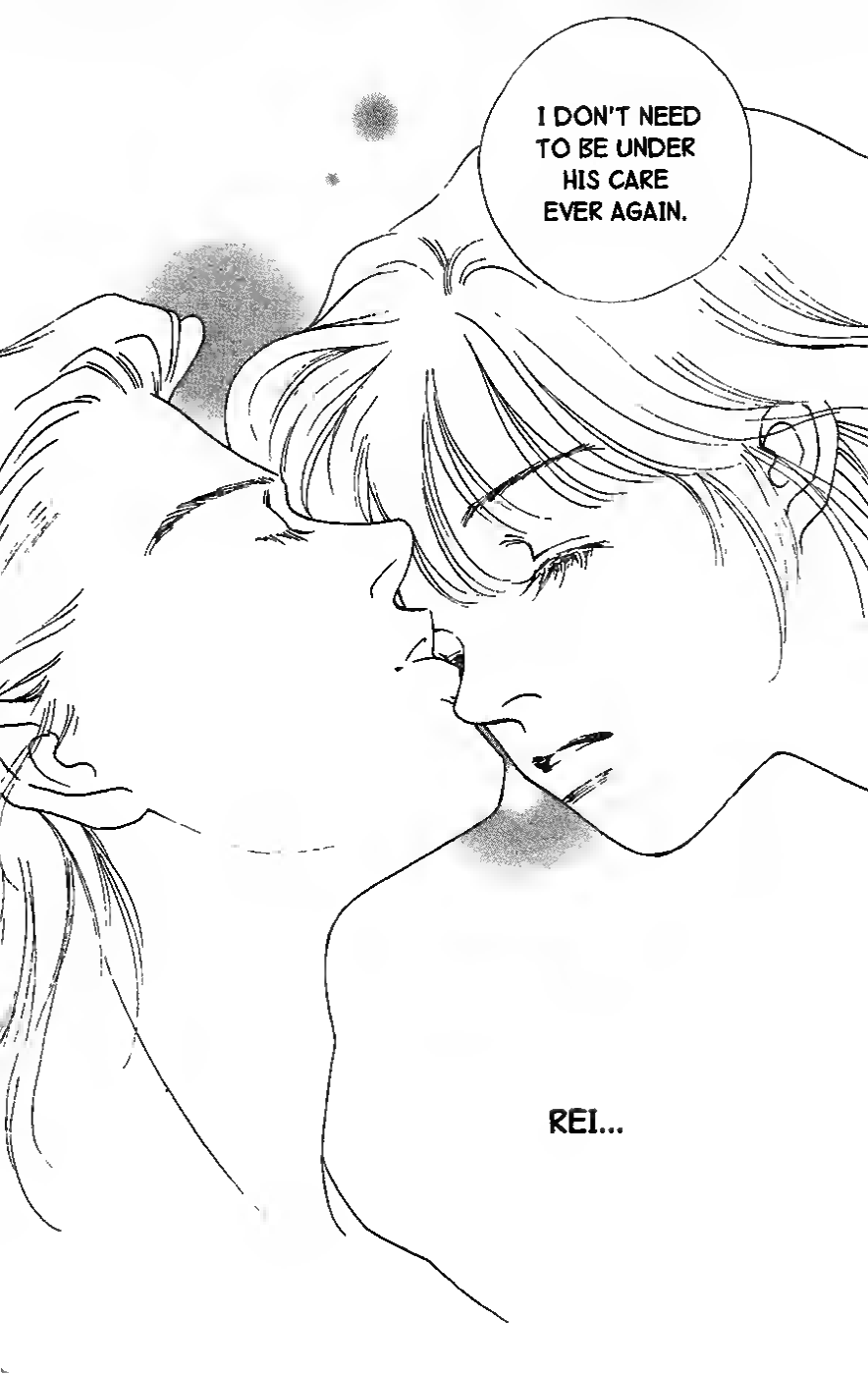

I'M SORRY. DID I WAKE YOU?
!

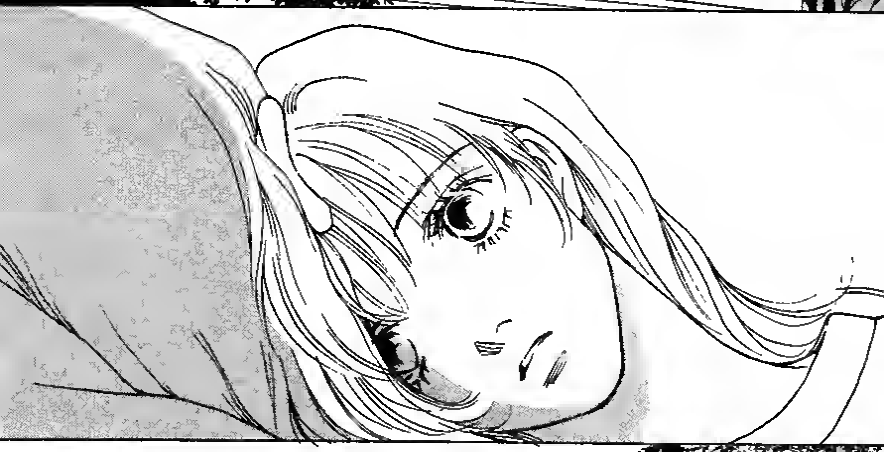

SORRY.
I WAS IN MY MOTHER'S ROOM.
I COULDN'T SLEEP...
...AND YOU WEREN'T HERE WHEN I GOT BACK.
I'M GOING TO THE PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL TOMORROW.
WHY? DID SOME-THING HAPPEN?
NO, I JUST THOUGHT I'D SAY HELLO TO MY OLD DOCTOR...

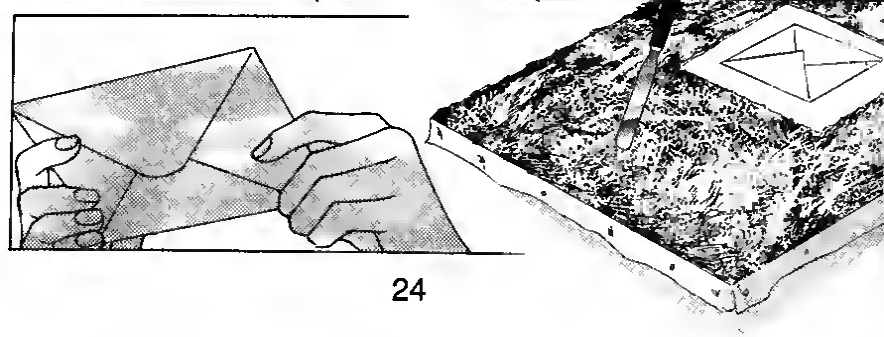
ISN'T THAT WHERE MASAO IS?
!
YEAH, MASAO...
YOU WENT TO SEE HIM WITH OFFICER OKUDA, RIGHT?
YEAH.
HOW IS HE?
.....
GUESS HE'S THE SAME.

PEOPLE'S HEARTS DON'T CHANGE...
...SO EASILY.

I WANT TO TELL THE DOCTOR TOMORROW...
...THAT I'M OKAY NOW.

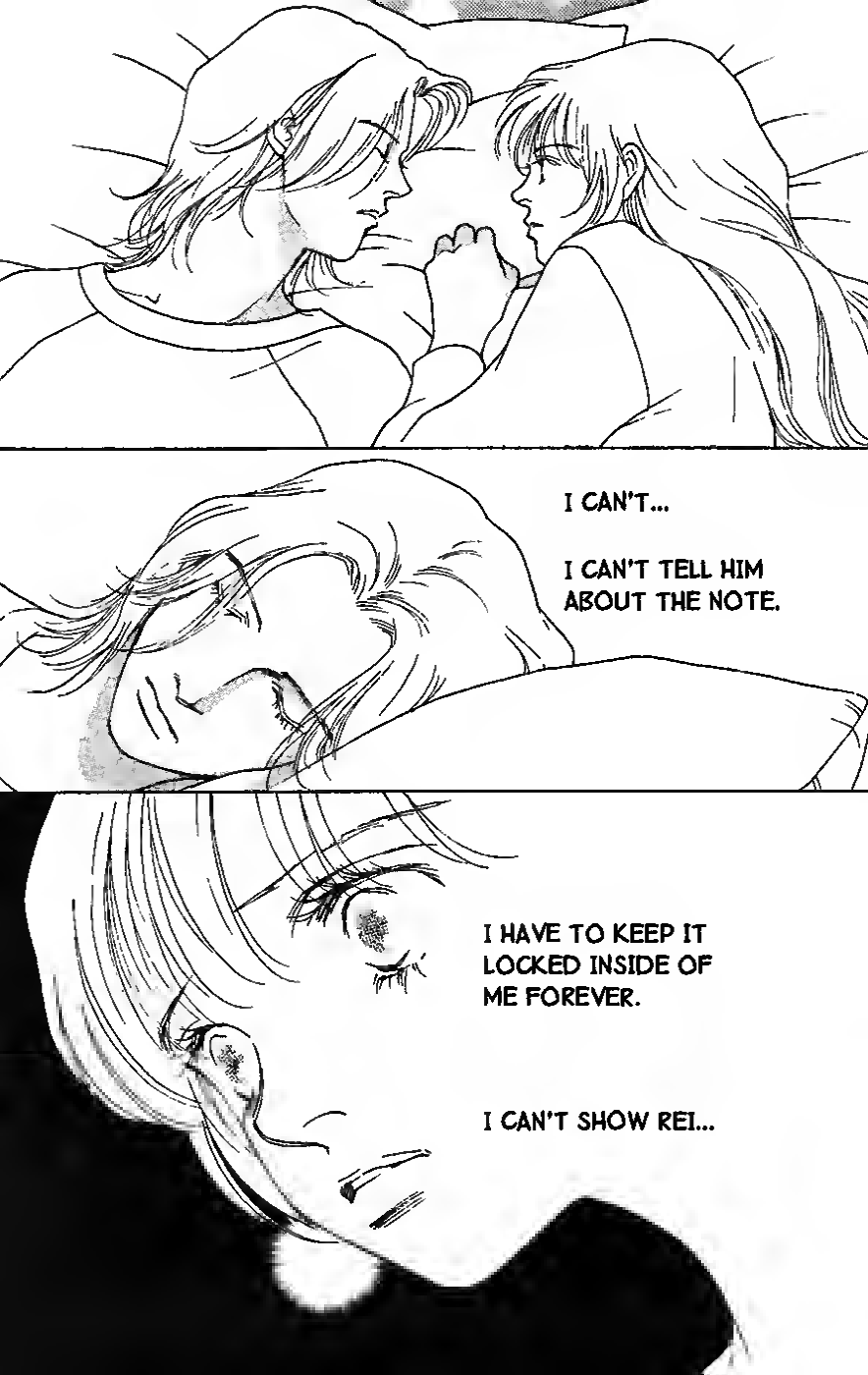

I DON'T NEED TO BE UNDER HIS CARE EVER AGAIN.
REI...





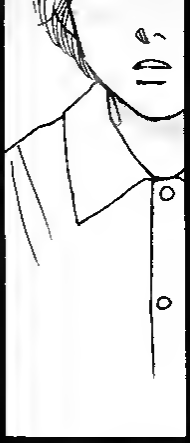
AT LEAST I'M GOING TO LEAVE YOU
WITH A PERFECT WOUND...

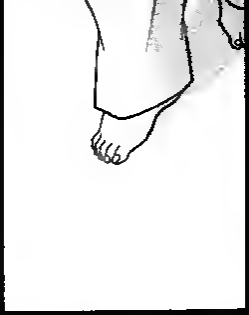
...SO YOU CAN COME TO ME SOON.


I CAN'T...
I CAN'T TELL HIM ABOUT THE NOTE.
I HAVE TO KEEP IT LOCKED INSIDE OF ME FOREVER.
I CAN'T SHOW REI...

REI...

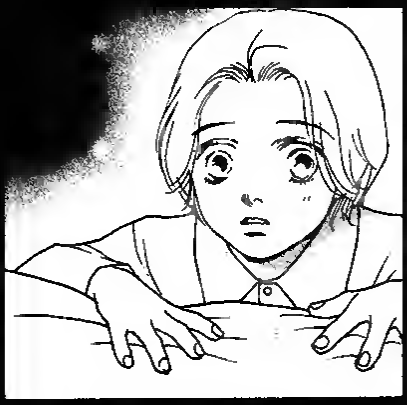
REI, COME HERE.



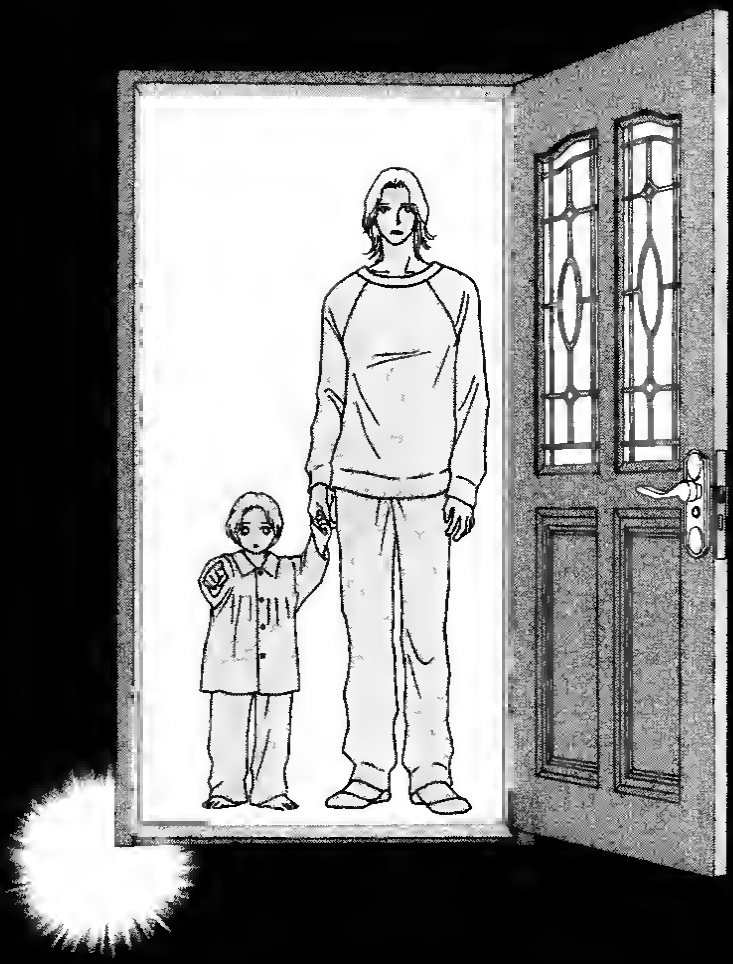


SOMETHING'S WEIRD WITH MOMMY.

HEY, WAKE UP!

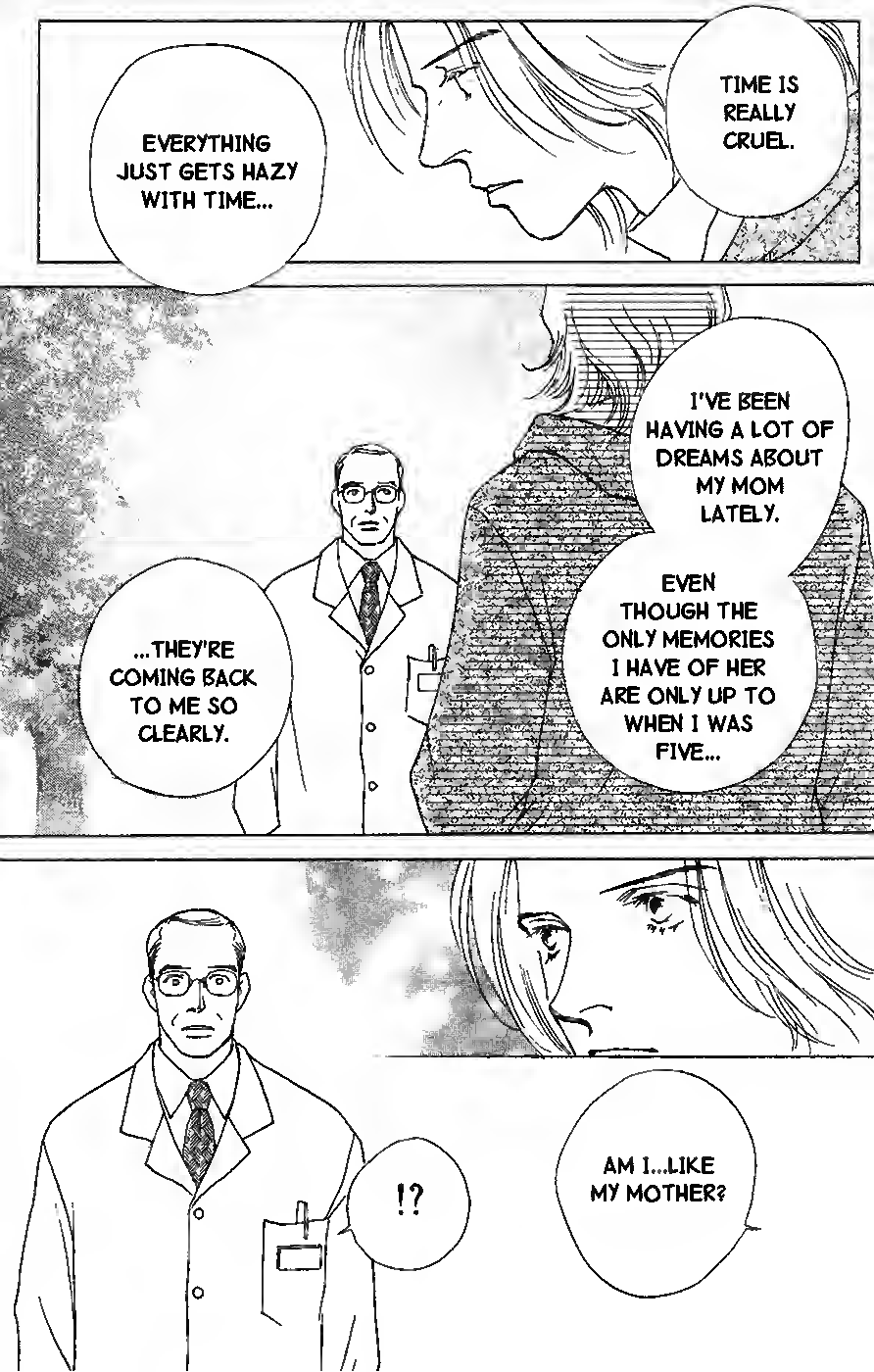


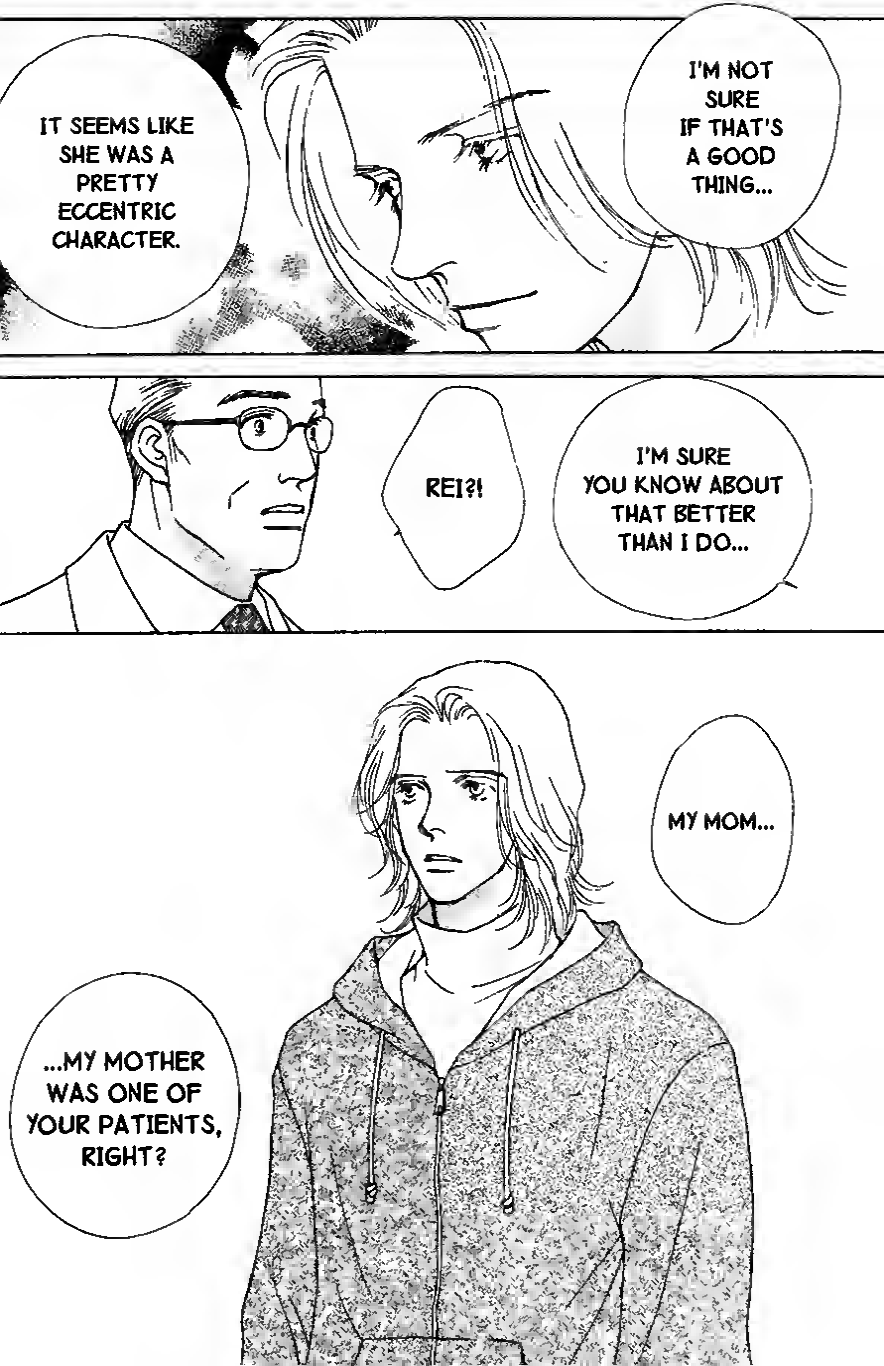
SEE? LOOK!
ISN'T THAT REALLY WEIRD?!



REI...

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME. YOU'RE ALL GROWN UP NOW!
SO... YOU'RE GOING TO BE 18 NEXT MONTH.
WOW, TIME REALLY PASSES QUICKLY.


TIME IS REALLY CRUEL.
EVERYTHING JUST GETS HAZY WITH TIME...
I'VE BEEN HAVING A LOT OF DREAMS ABOUT MY MOM LATELY.
EVEN THOUGH THE ONLY MEMORIES I HAVE OF HER ARE ONLY UP TO WHEN I WAS FIVE...
...THEY'RE COMING BACK TO ME SO CLEARLY.
AM I...LIKE MY MOTHER?
!?

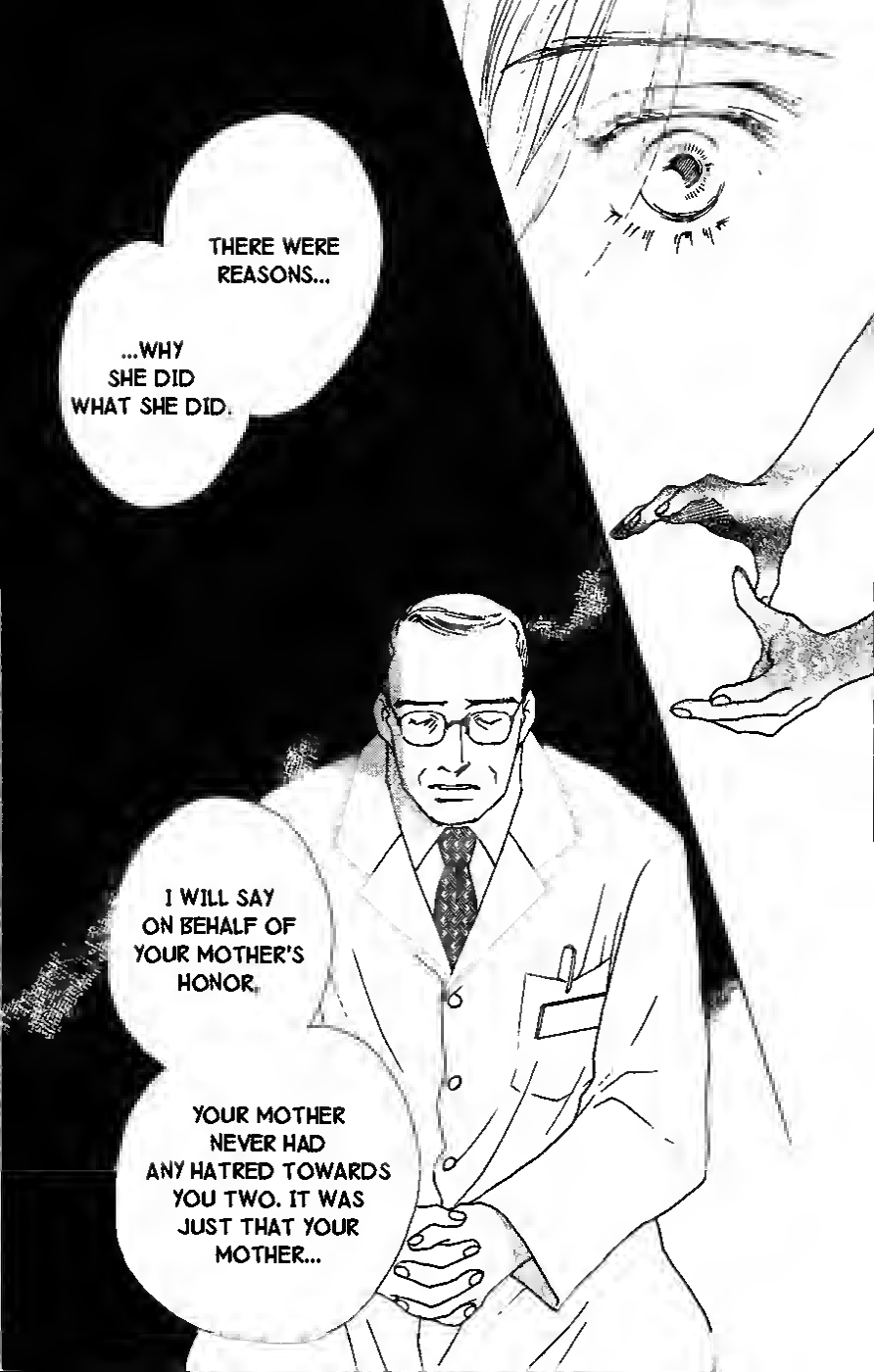

IT SEEMS LIKE SHE WAS A PRETTY ECCENTRIC CHARACTER.
I'M NOT SURE IF THAT'S A GOOD THING...
REI?!
I'M SURE YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT BETTER THAN I DO...
MY MOM...
...MY MOTHER WAS ONE OF YOUR PATIENTS, RIGHT?

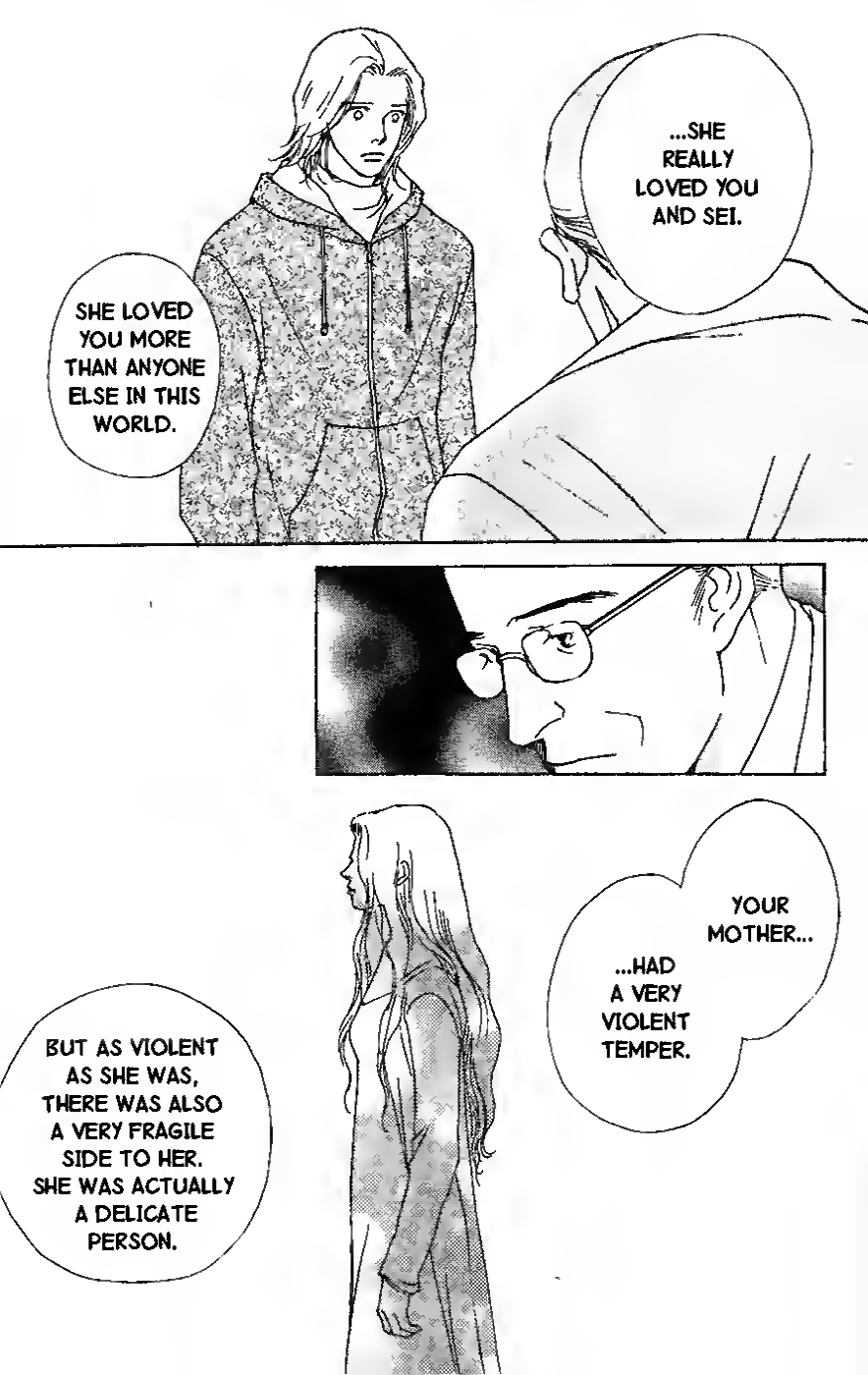
YOU WERE THE ONE WHO USED TO TAKE ME OUTSIDE TO THE COURTYARD TO PLAY...
.....
...WHEN I WAS IN MY MOTHER'S ROOM.
I WANT TO KNOW...
...ABOUT MY MOTHER.
THE TRUTH.

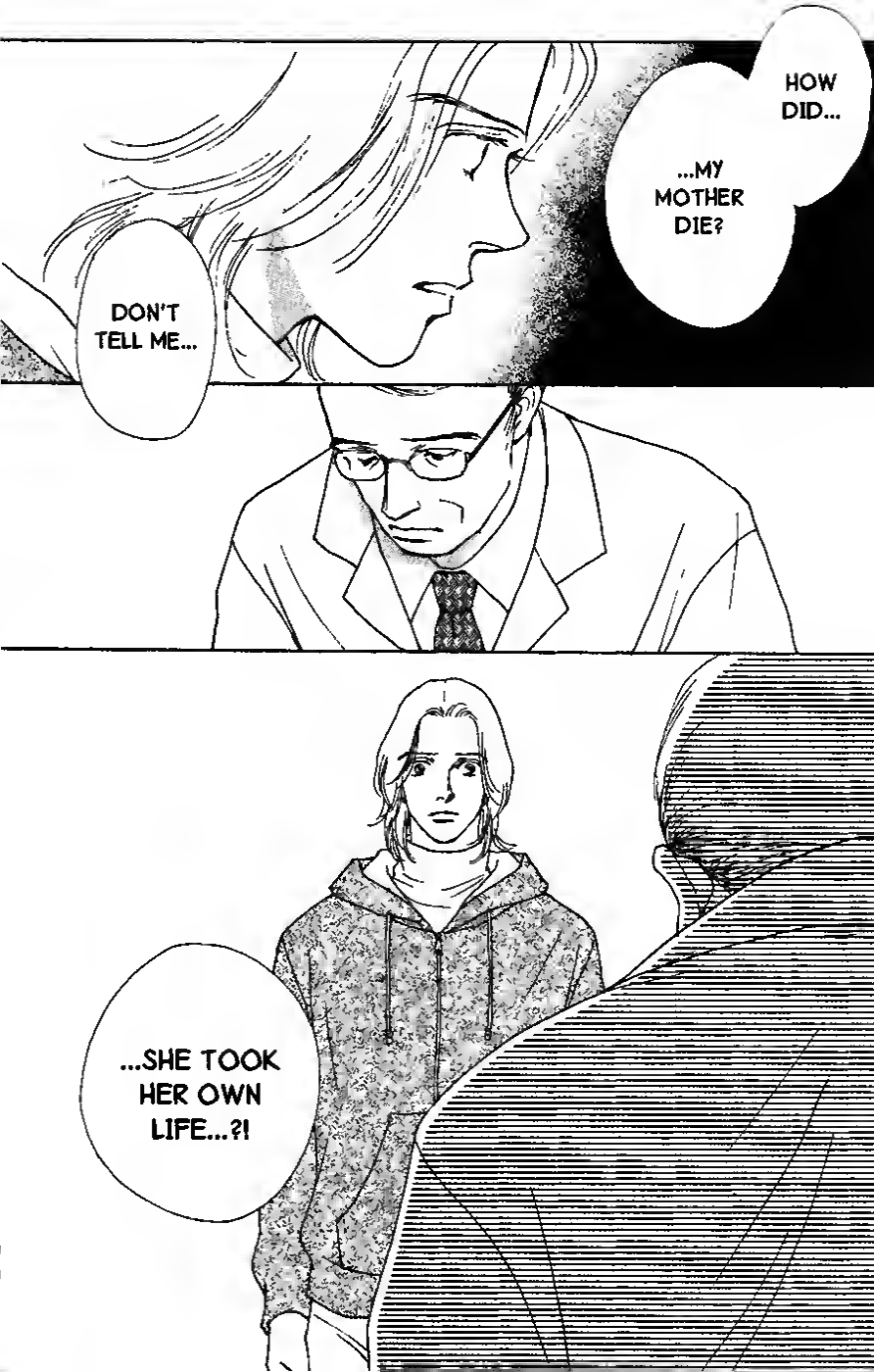
WHY WAS MY MOTHER ADMITTED TO THE HOSPITAL?
MY FATHER TOLD ME SHE DIED OF LEUKEMIA, BUT...
...WHAT WAS IT REALLY?
PLEASE, DOCTOR, TELL ME.
IT WAS 13 YEARS AGO...
...WHEN YOUR FATHER CAME TO TALK TO ME.

YOUR FATHER STRUGGLED A LOT...
...ABOUT WHETHER SHE SHOULD BE ADMITTED.
BUT IN THE END, TO PROTECT YOU AND SEI,
THERE WAS NO CHOICE BUT TO ADMIT HER.
TO PROTECT ME AND SEI...?

YOUR MOTHER TRIED TO KILL YOU.


THERE WERE REASONS...
...WHY SHE DID WHAT SHE DID.
I WILL SAY ON BEHALF OF YOUR MOTHER'S HONOR.
YOUR MOTHER NEVER HAD ANY HATRED TOWARDS YOU TWO. IT WAS JUST THAT YOUR MOTHER...

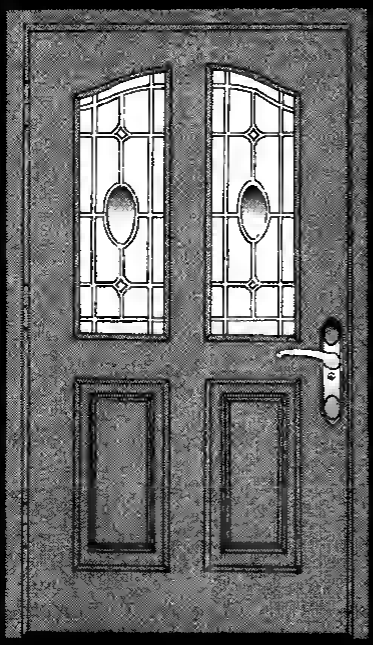

...SHE REALLY LOVED YOU AND SEI.
SHE LOVED YOU MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE IN THIS WORLD.
YOUR MOTHER...
...HAD A VERY VIOLENT TEMPER.
BUT AS VIOLENT AS SHE WAS, THERE WAS ALSO A VERY FRAGILE SIDE TO HER. SHE WAS ACTUALLY A DELICATE PERSON.

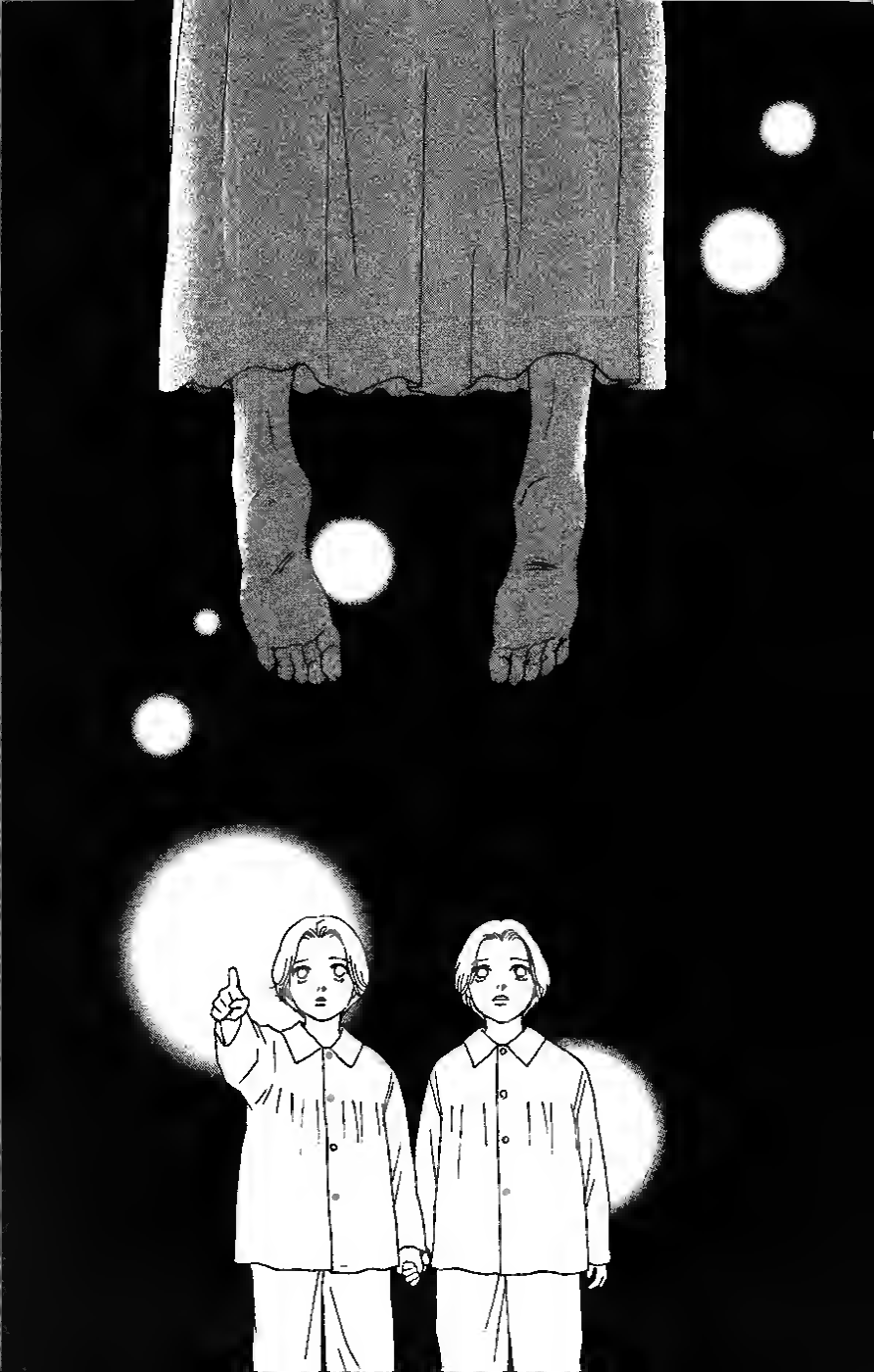

HOW DID...
...MY MOTHER DIE?
DON'T TELL ME...
...SHE TOOK HER OWN LIFE...?!

I MISTAKENLY RELEASED HER BECAUSE I THOUGHT SHE WAS MENTALLY STABLE.
I BELIEVED SHE WAS READY TO GO HOME. BUT I WAS WRONG.
YOUR MOTHER HANGED HERSELF IN HER ROOM.

REI, WAKE UP!
THERE'S SOMETHING WEIRD
GOING ON WITH MOMMY.

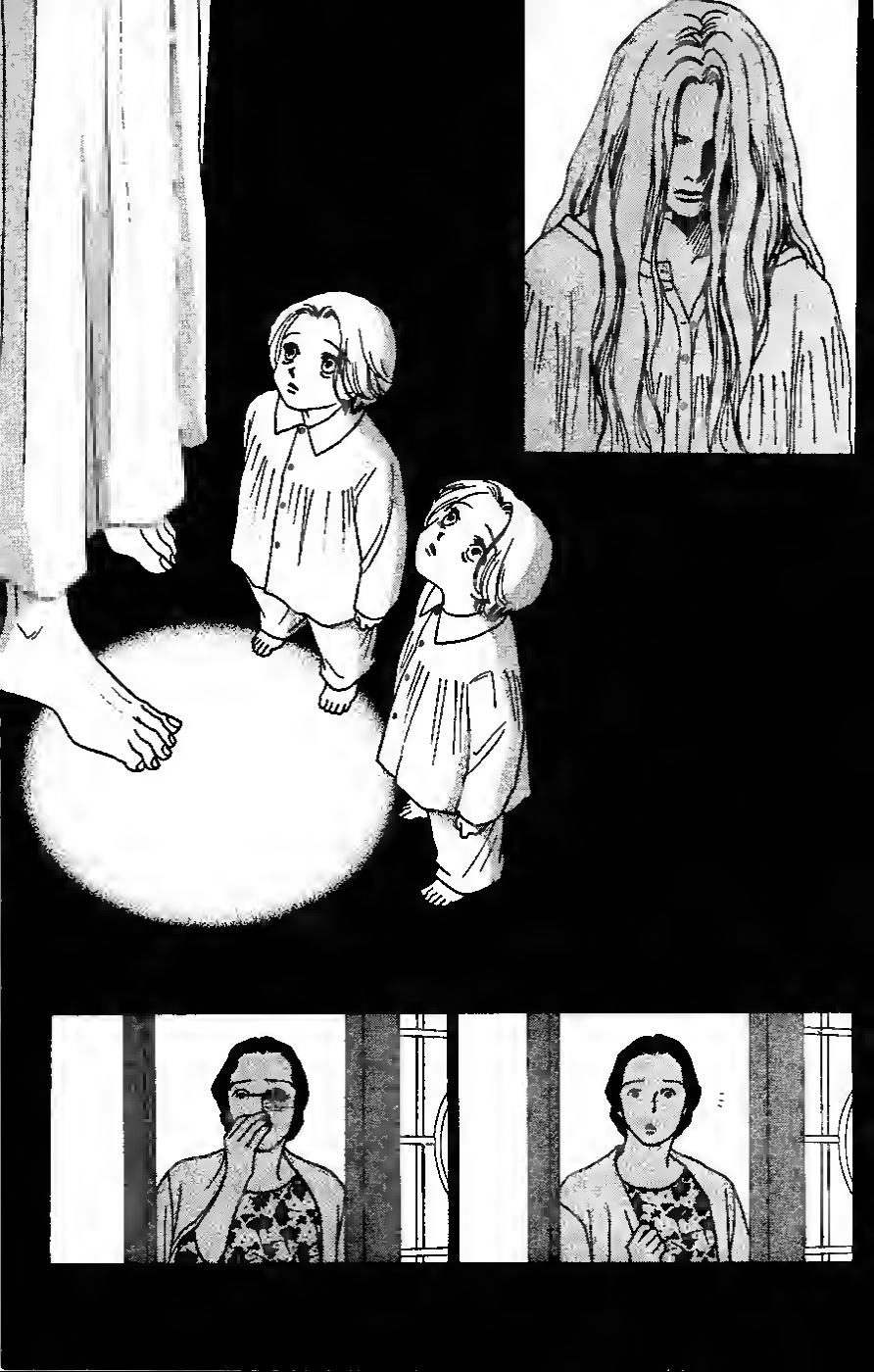
MOMMY'S FLOATING IN THE AIR.



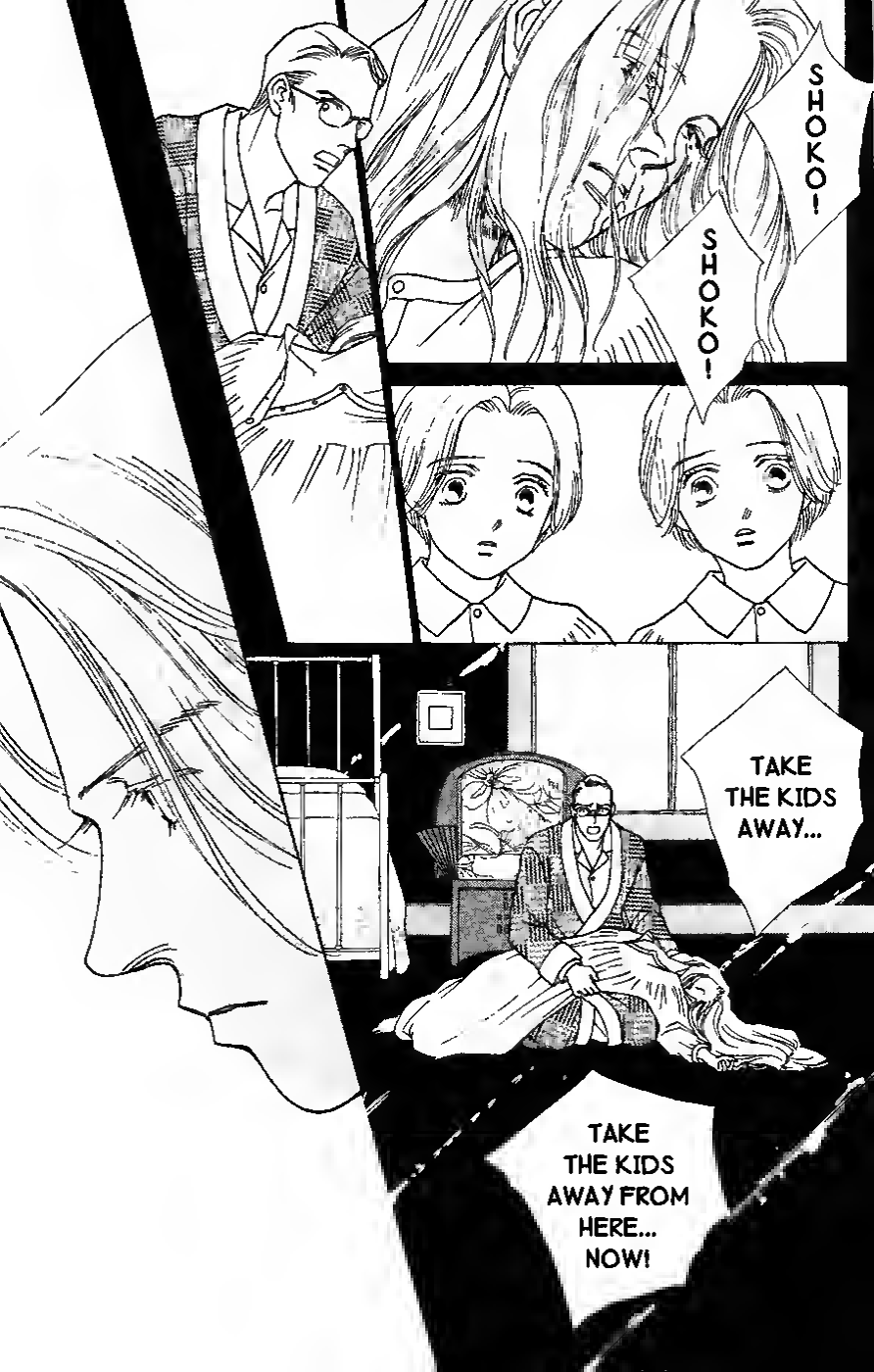


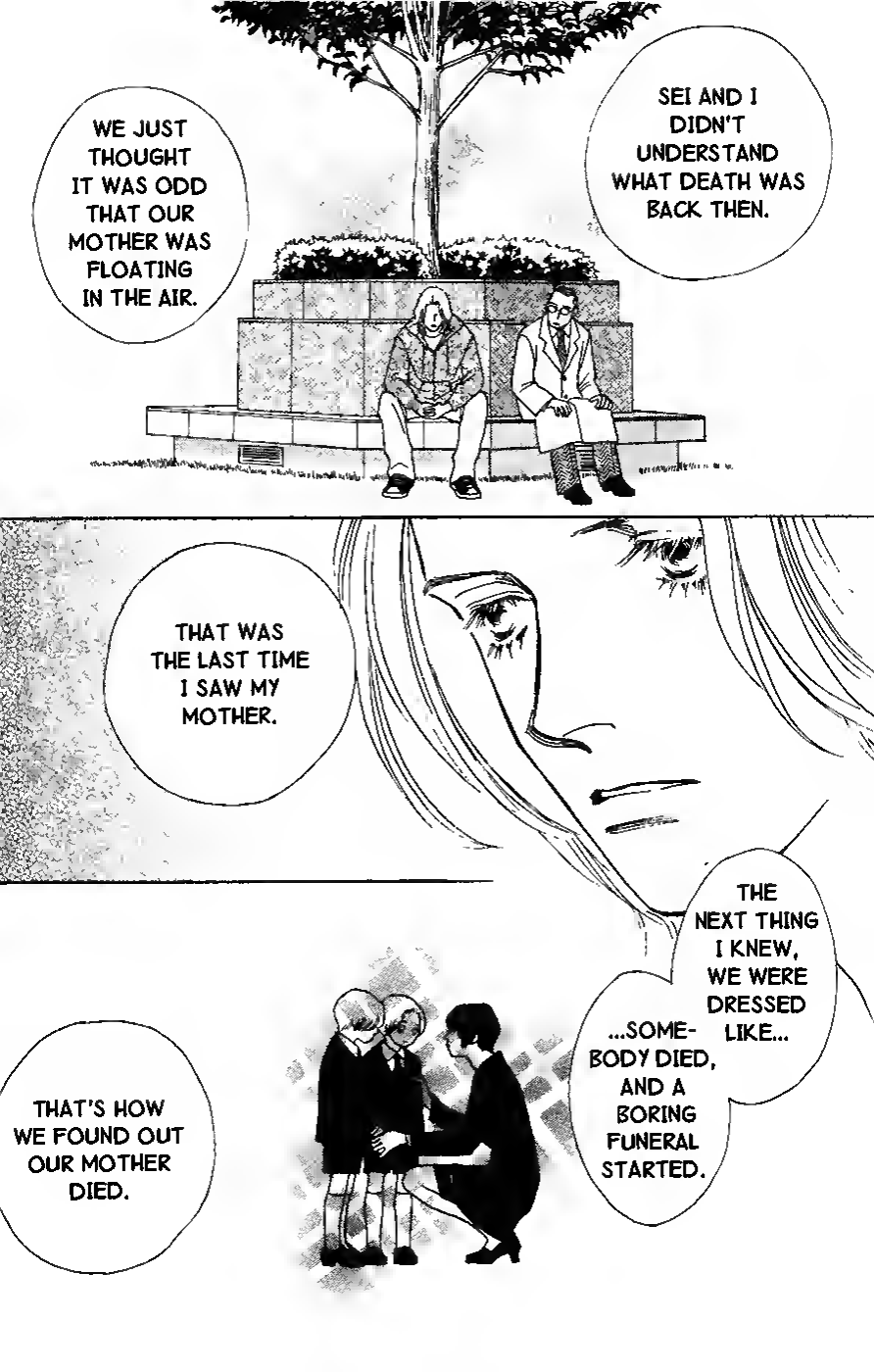
MARS

THAT'S RIGHT.
WE WERE BOTH THERE THAT NIGHT.
WE SAW OUR MOTHER HANGING FROM THE CEILING.



SHOKO!
MR. KASHINO,
MR. KASHINO.
WHAT THE HELL...?!!
CALL AN AMBU-LANCE!

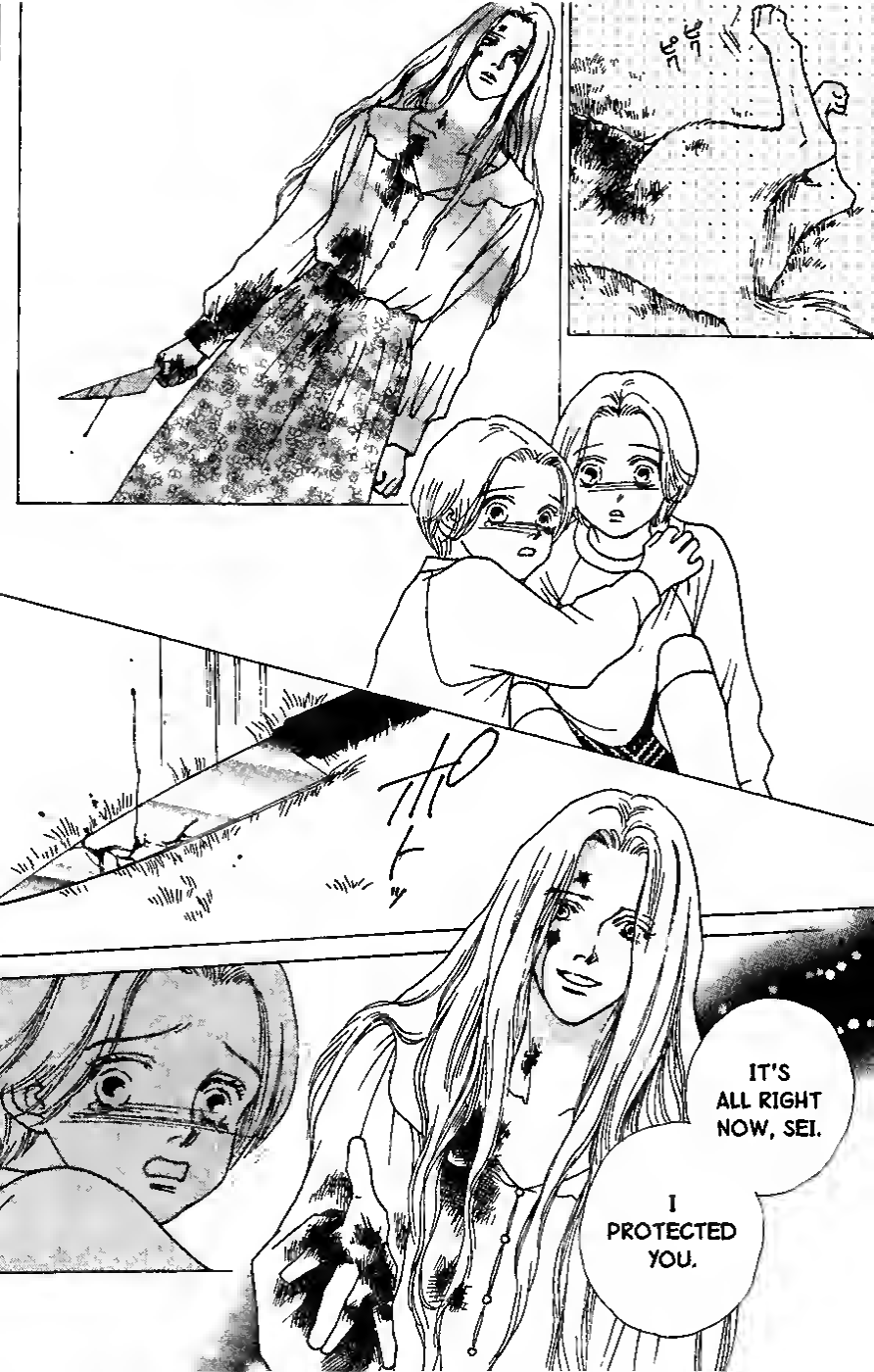

SHOKO!
SHOKO!
TAKE THE KIDS AWAY...
TAKE THE KIDS AWAY FROM HERE... NOW!

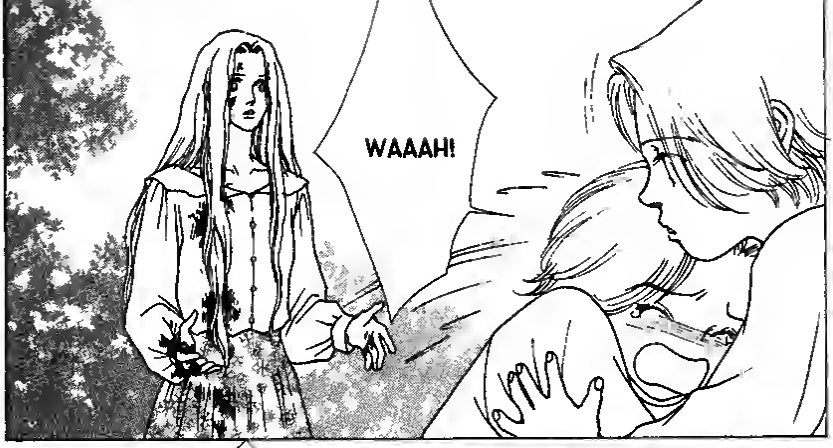

WE JUST THOUGHT IT WAS ODD THAT OUR MOTHER WAS FLOATING IN THE AIR.
SEI AND I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT DEATH WAS BACK THEN.
THAT WAS THE LAST TIME I SAW MY MOTHER.
THE NEXT THING I KNEW, WE WERE DRESSED LIKE...
...SOMEBODY DIED, AND A BORING FUNERAL STARTED.
THAT'S HOW WE FOUND OUT OUR MOTHER DIED.

DID SHE REGRET IT?
REGRET... HAVING US?
REI.
WHY DID SHE TRY TO KILL US?
WHY DID MY MOTHER HAVE TO DIE?
WE'RE NOT OUR FATHER'S REAL CHILDREN, RIGHT?

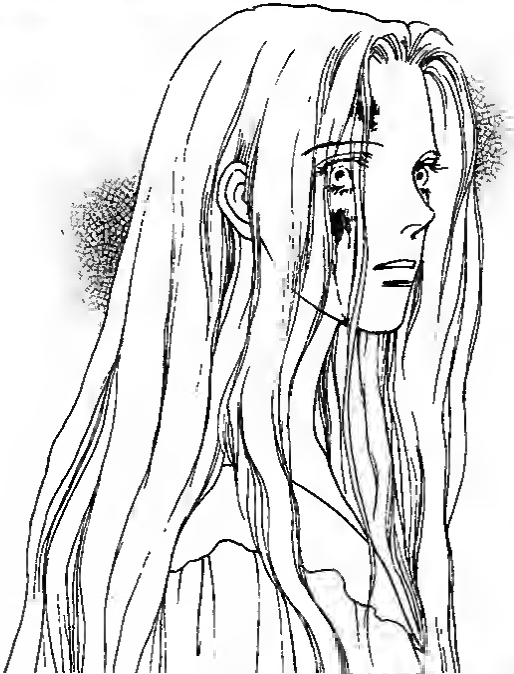
IS IT ALL OUR FAULT?
THE FACT THAT...
...SHE WAS ADMITTED TO THE HOSPITAL AND SHE COMMITED SUICIDE...
NO.
IT WAS BECAUSE OF YOU TWO THAT SHE WANTED TO KEEP ON LIVING.
NO, REI, YOUR MOTHER DIDN'T REGRET HAVING YOU AT ALL.

TO BE HONEST, THE WAY YOUR MOTHER BEHAVED TOWARDS YOU TWO WAS NOT NORMAL.
THE REASON YOUR FATHER CAME TO ME AT FIRST WAS TO TALK ABOUT...
...HIS CONCERNS WITH HER UNHEALTHY ATTACHMENT TO YOU.
MR. KASHINO, PLEASE COME QUICKLY!
TOO MUCH LOVE CAN SOMETIMES LEAD TO TRAGEDY...
MISS SHOKO...!
...FOR BOTH THE ONE GIVING IT AND THE ONES RECEIVING IT.

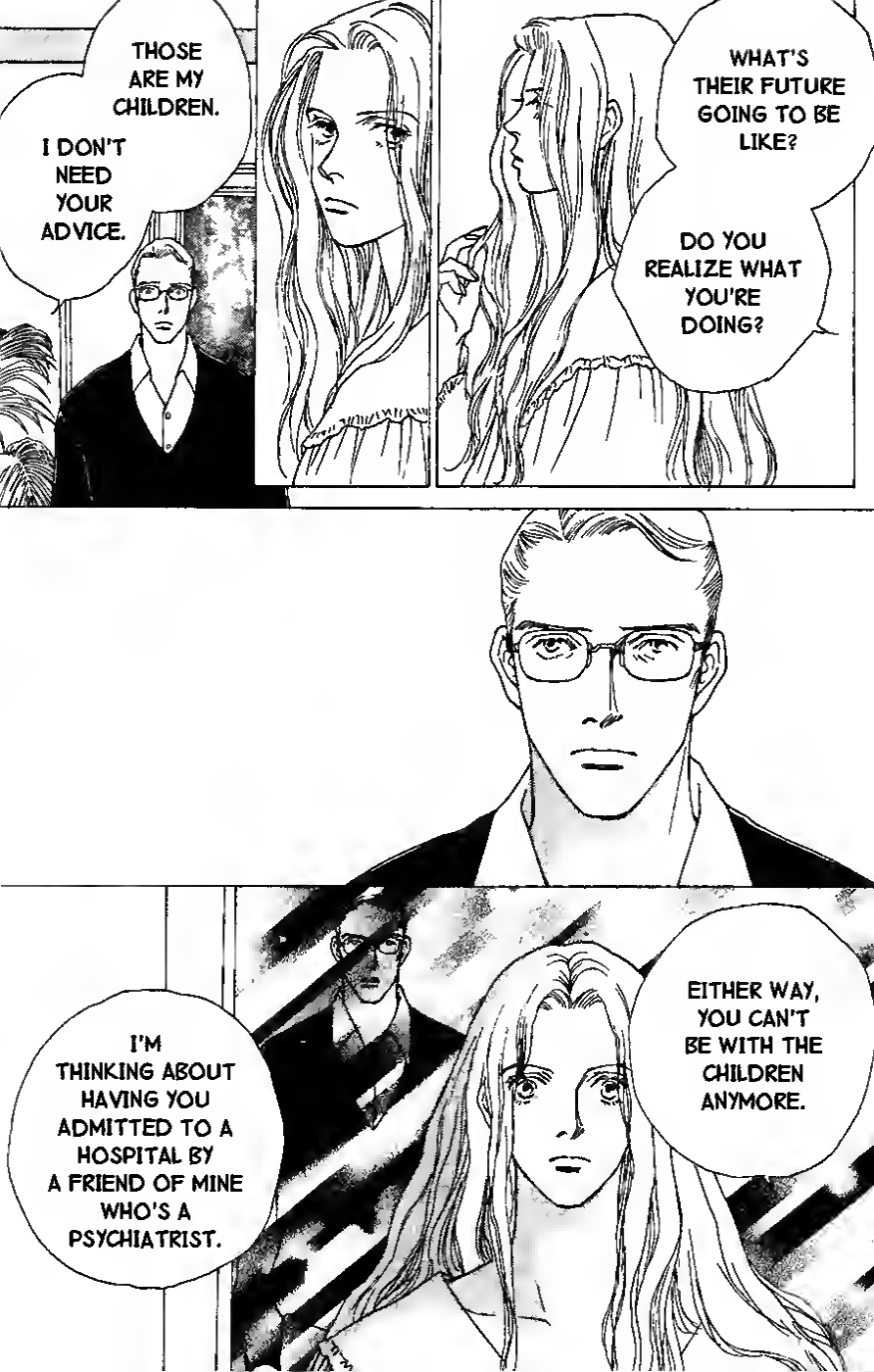

IT'S ALL RIGHT NOW, SEI.
I PROTECTED YOU.


WAAAH!

SHOKO!



YOUR DOG WAS TRYING TO ATTACK THEM. AS THEIR MOTHER, IT'S ONLY NATURAL...
...TO WANT TO PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN FROM DANGER.
WHAT IN THE WORLD WERE YOU THINKING? AND RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE CHILDREN!
THERE WAS NO REASON TO KILL HIM.
THE DOG DIDN'T ATTACK THEM. ACCORDING TO THE MAID, THE DOG WAS JUST PLAYING.
THE CHILDREN ARE FOUR YEARS OLD, BUT YOU HAVEN'T EVEN ALLOWED THEM TO LEAVE THE HOUSE. YOU'RE TOTALLY SHELTERING THEM FROM THE WORLD.
DID YOU SEE HOW SCARED SEI WAS? TO MAKE A CHILD GO THROUGH THAT!
YOU'RE DOING EVERYTHING WRONG.


THOSE ARE MY CHILDREN.
I DON'T NEED YOUR ADVICE.
WHAT'S THEIR FUTURE GOING TO BE LIKE?
DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU'RE DOING?
I'M THINKING ABOUT HAVING YOU ADMITTED TO A HOSPITAL BY A FRIEND OF MINE WHO'S A PSYCHIATRIST.
EITHER WAY, YOU CAN'T BE WITH THE CHILDREN ANYMORE.

I WON'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT TODAY. PLEASE GET HELP, SHOKO.

I'M NOT SAYING IT'S PERMANENT.

IT'LL BE UP TO YOU WHETHER YOU'RE ABLE LIVE WITH THEM AGAIN.

OH, SO YOU THINK YOU CAN FINALLY DO WHATEVER YOU WANT...

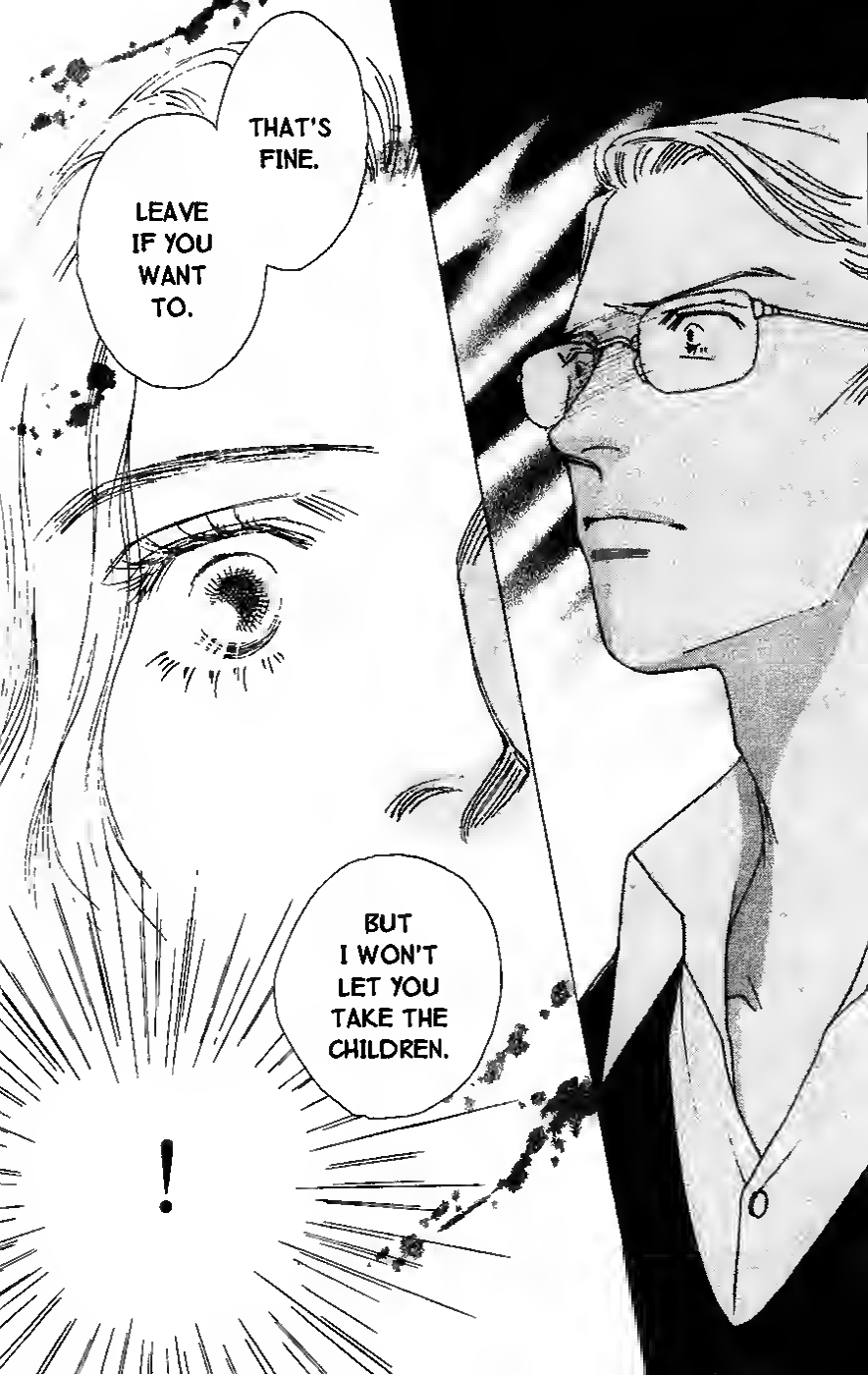
...NOW THAT YOUR FATHER'S GONE?

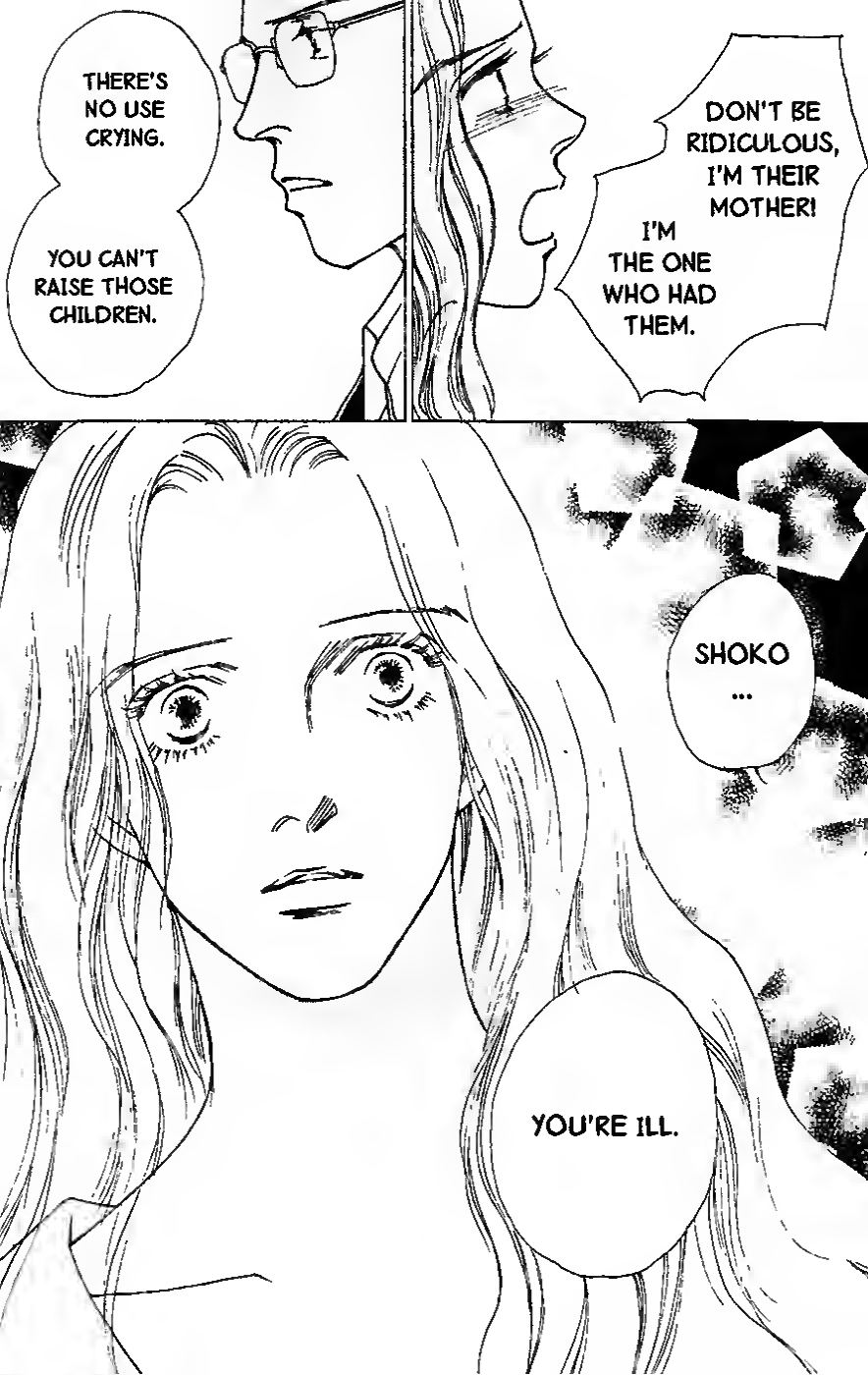
!

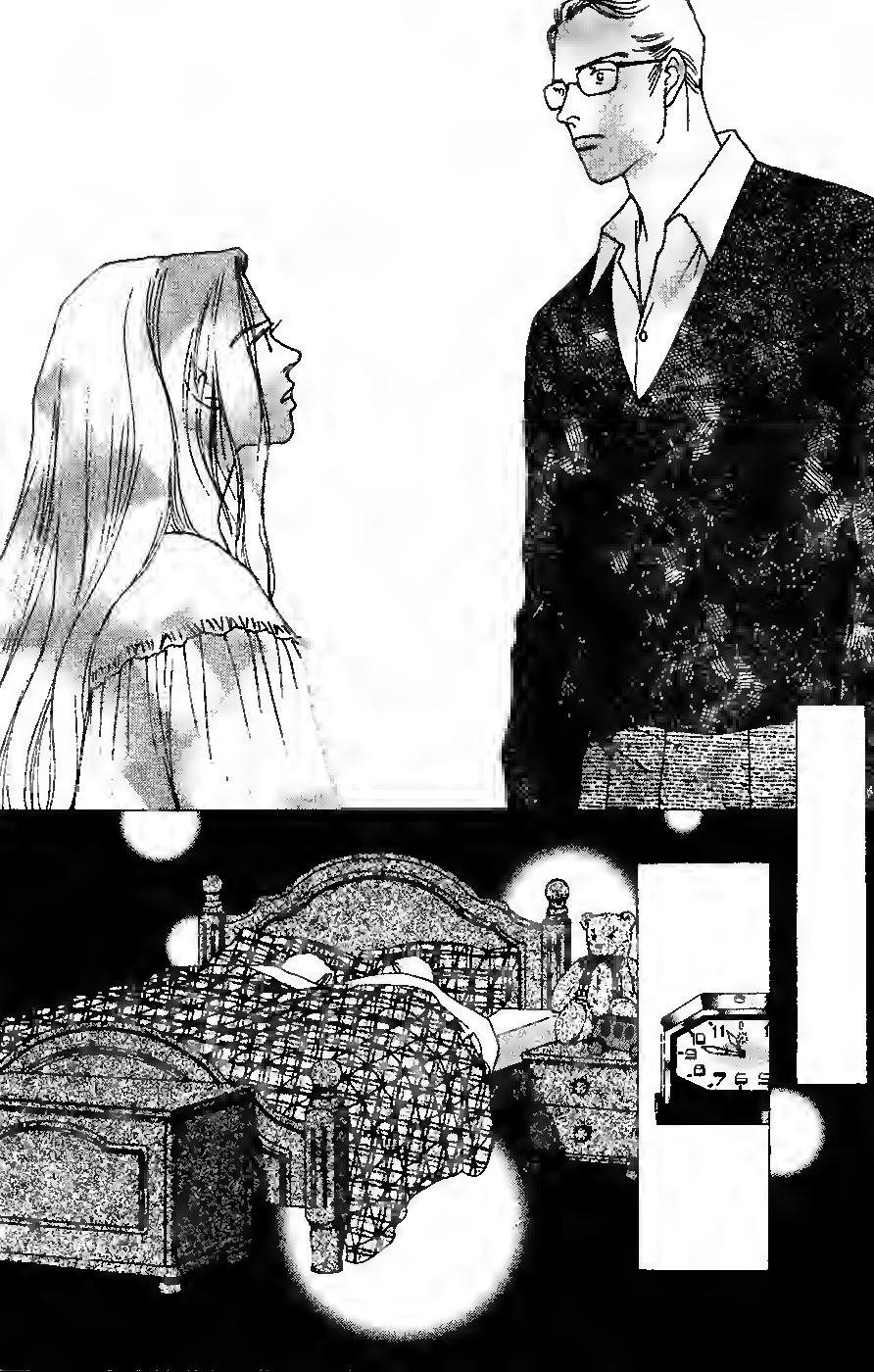
YOU'RE GOING TO LOCK ME UP?!

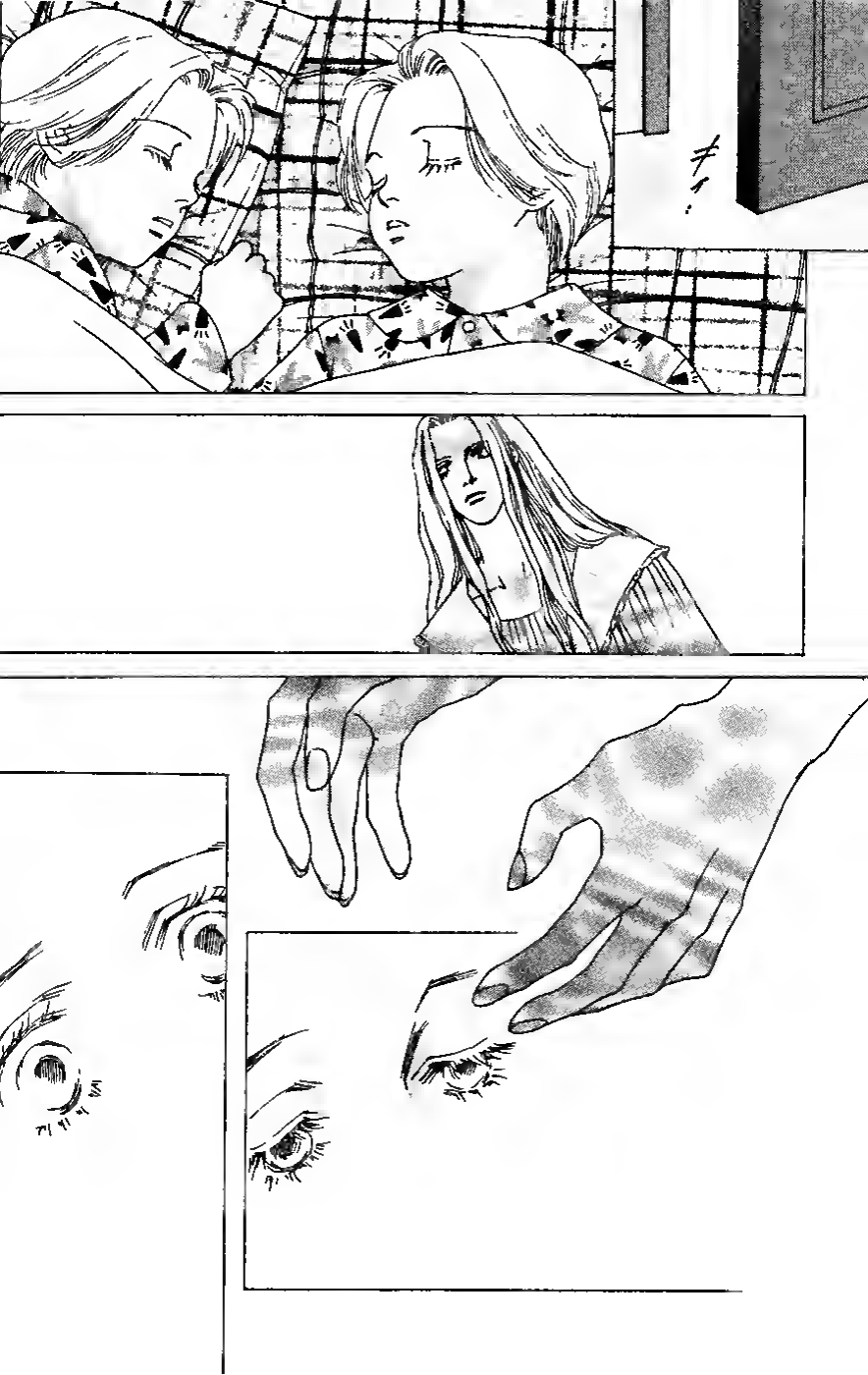
YOU'RE TRYING TO GET BACK AT ME BY TAKING THE CHILDREN AWAY FROM ME!
BUT I WON'T LET YOU DO WHATEVER YOU WANT.
I'LL TAKE REI AND SEI AND LEAVE THIS HOUSE.
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. YOU'RE NOT STABLE ENOUGH TO MOTHER THEM NOW.
THOSE CHILDREN ARE...
DO YOU THINK YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO BE THEIR FATHER?!
HOW CAN YOU SAY THAT?!

REI AND SEI ARE AKIHIKO'S CHILDREN.
YOUR DEAD BROTHER, AKIHIKO!


THAT'S FINE.
LEAVE IF YOU WANT TO.
BUT I WON'T LET YOU TAKE THE CHILDREN.
!


THERE'S NO USE CRYING.
YOU CAN'T RAISE THOSE CHILDREN.
DON'T BE RIDICULOUS, I'M THEIR MOTHER!
I'M THE ONE WHO HAD THEM.
SHOKO ...
YOU'RE ILL.

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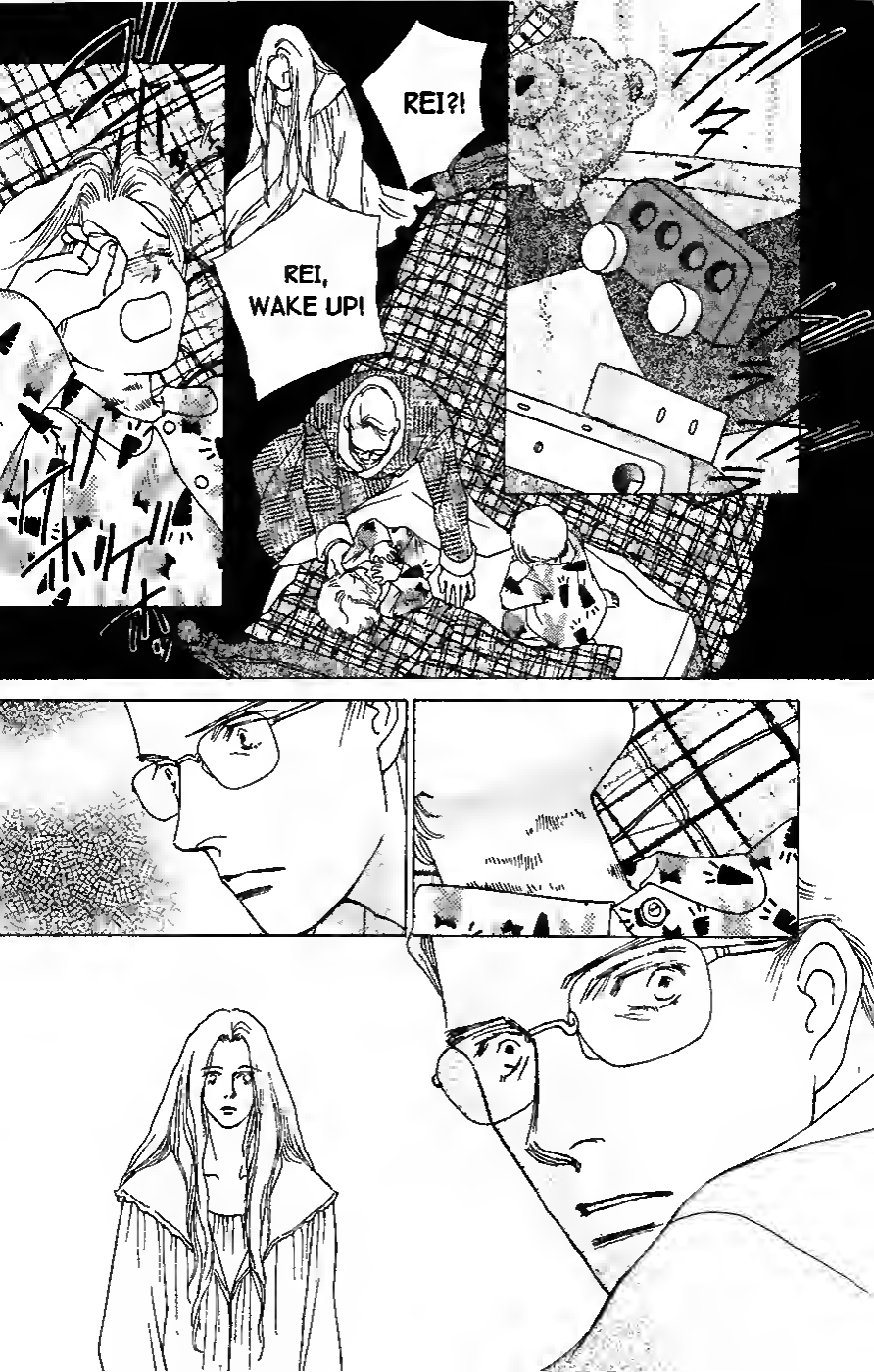
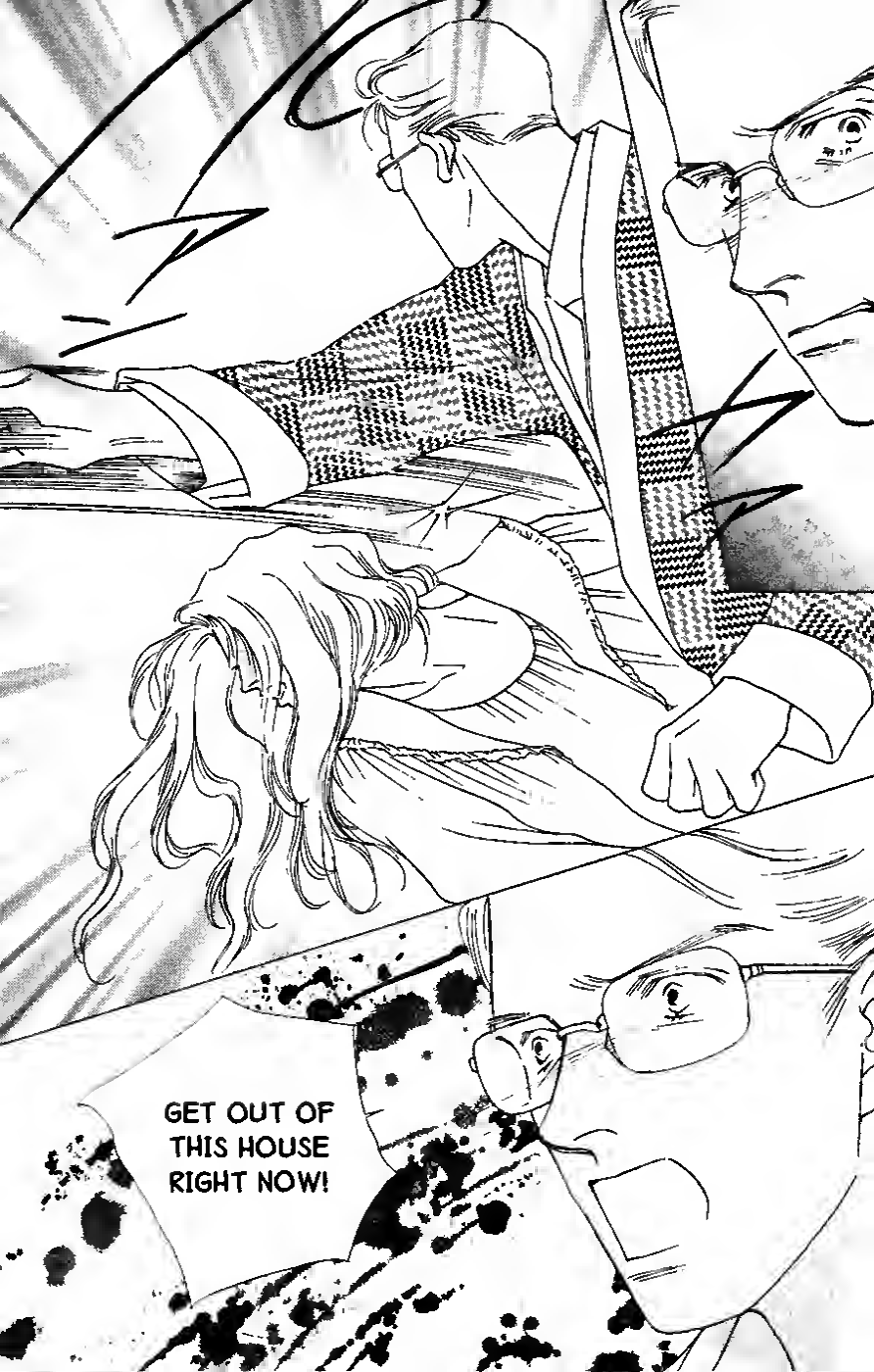
URR.
AAARH.
URRRGH.

IT'S OKAY.
DON'T BE SCARED.
I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.

WAAAAAH
WAAAAAAAH
REI?!
SEI?!
STOP IT!! SHOKO!!

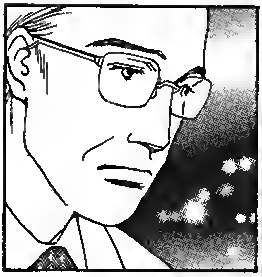

REI?!
REI, WAKE UP!

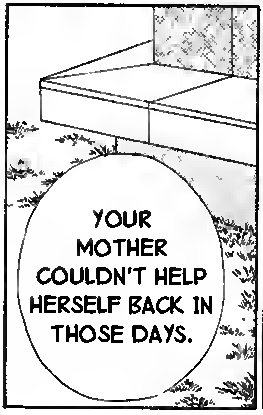

GET OUT OF THIS HOUSE RIGHT NOW!

DADDY, REI'S GONNA DIE.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. REI'S ALL RIGHT NOW...
ゲホゲホ

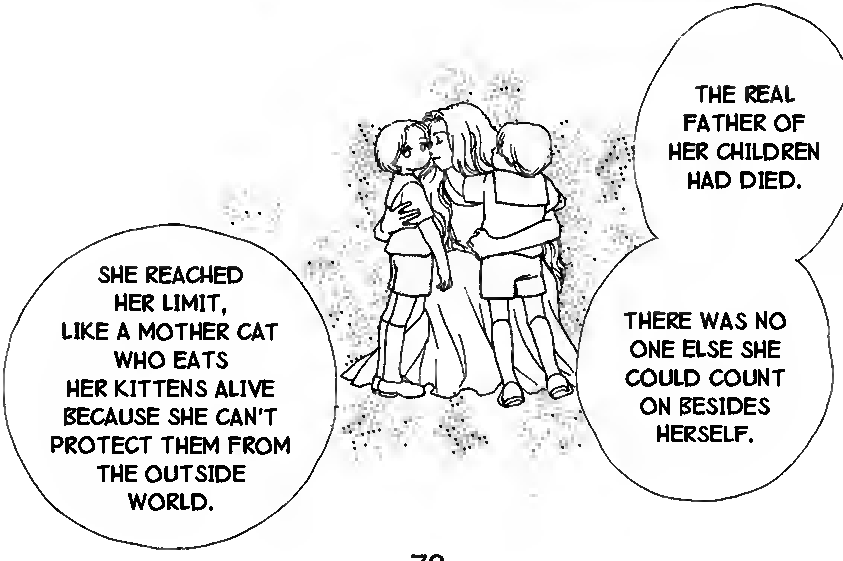
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO HIT ME.
GOD!

OUR FATHER'S A COLD AND SCARY MAN.
THAT'S WHEN YOUR FATHER DECIDED THAT NO MATTER WHAT,
HE WOULD HELP YOUR MOTHER GET WELL.
BUT TO DEFY YOUR FATHER, YOUR MOTHER BECAME MORE AND MORE OBSTINATE.

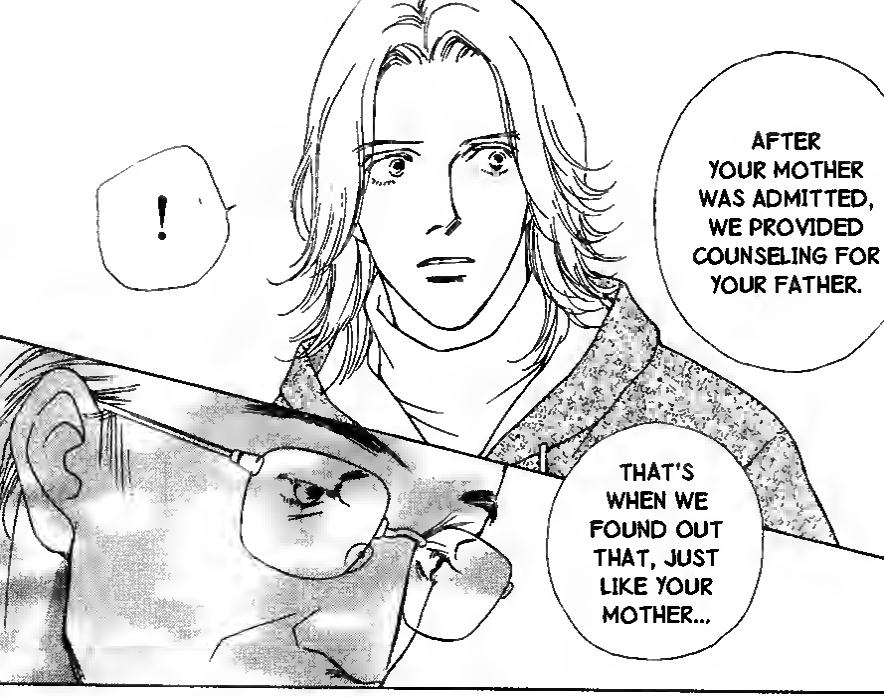



YOUR MOTHER COULDN'T HELP HERSELF BACK IN THOSE DAYS.

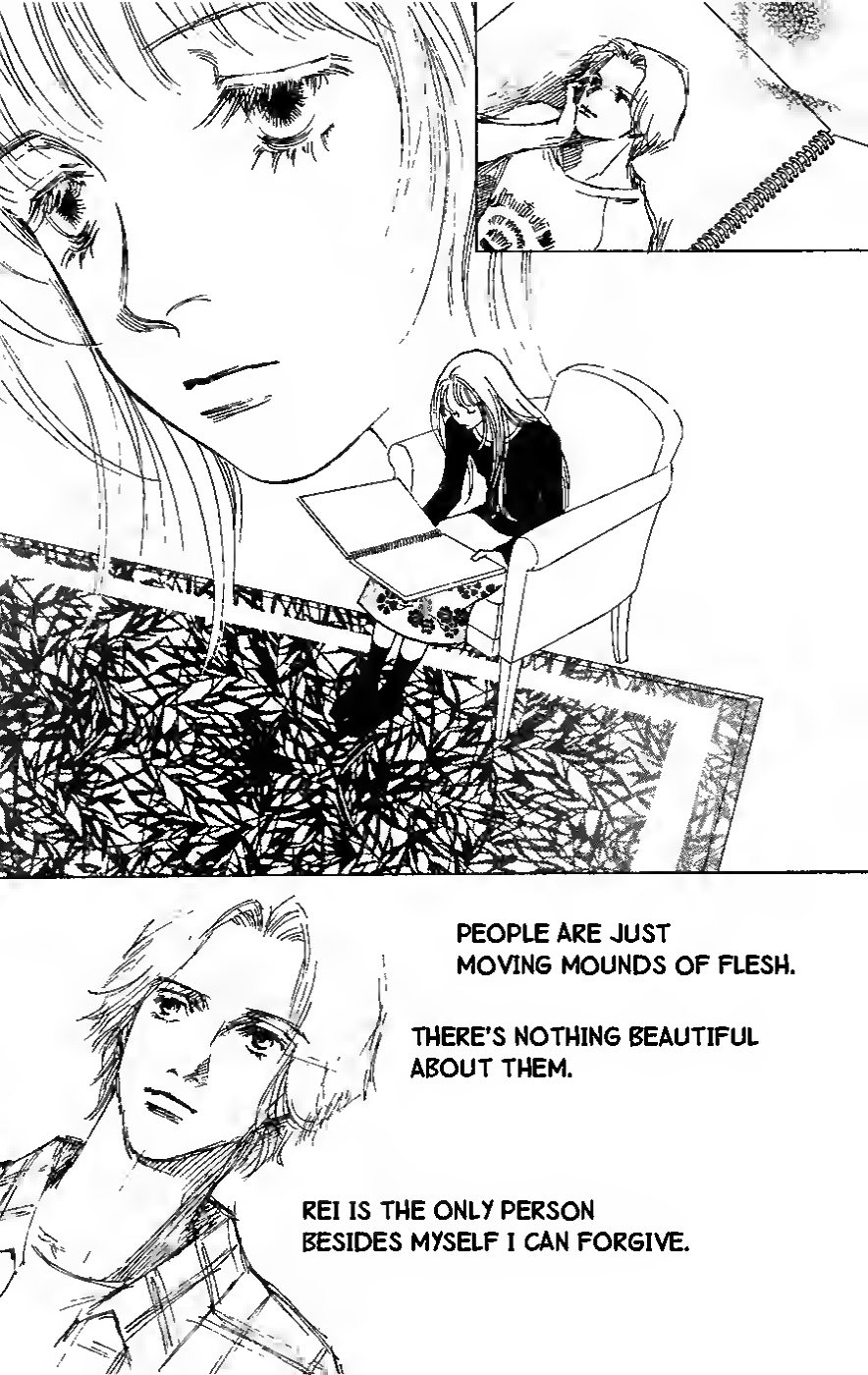
WHEN I WAS LITTLE, SHE WOULD TELL ME AND SEI THAT OVER AND OVER AGAIN.
WE BELIEVED IT LIKE IT WAS A SPELL SHE PUT ON US.

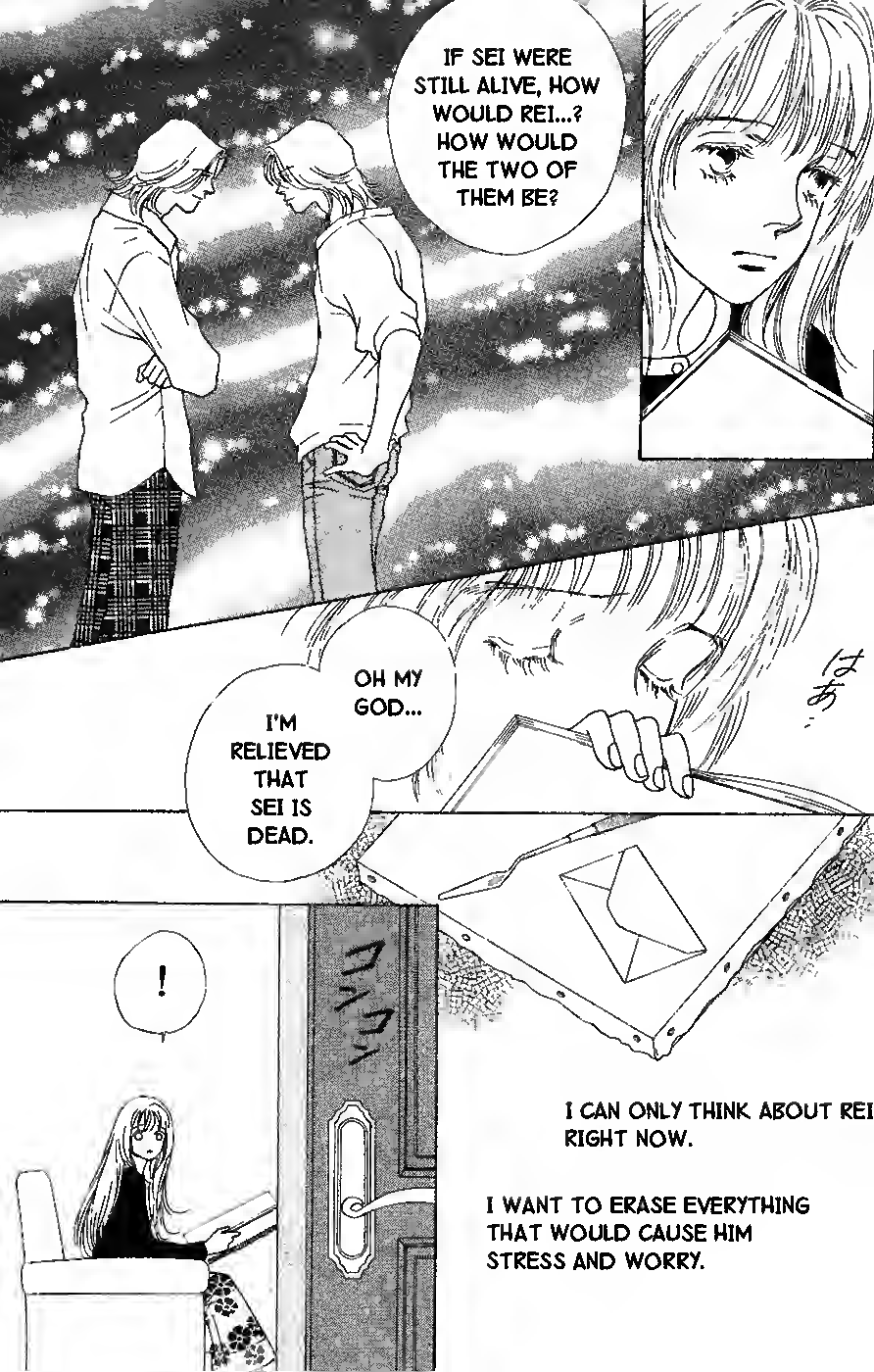

THE REAL FATHER OF HER CHILDREN HAD DIED.
THERE WAS NO ONE ELSE SHE COULD COUNT ON BESIDES HERSELF.
SHE REACHED HER LIMIT, LIKE A MOTHER CAT WHO EATS HER KITTENS ALIVE BECAUSE SHE CAN'T PROTECT THEM FROM THE OUTSIDE WORLD.

I WONDER WHAT DROVE HER TO THAT POINT?
THINKING ABOUT IT NOW, MY FATHER NEVER TREATED US BADLY.
HE'S NOT THE TYPE TO DO ANYTHING LIKE THAT.
THAT HAD A LOT TO DO WITH YOUR GRANDFATHER.
WHY DID MY MOTHER FEEL SHE WAS IN SUCH DANGER?



...DARKNESS EXISTED INSIDE HIS SOUL AS WELL.


PEOPLE ARE JUST MOVING MOUNDS OF FLESH.
THERE'S NOTHING BEAUTIFUL ABOUT THEM.
REI IS THE ONLY PERSON BESIDES MYSELF I CAN FORGIVE.


IF SEI WERE STILL ALIVE, HOW WOULD REI...? HOW WOULD THE TWO OF THEM BE?
OH MY GOD...
I'M RELIEVED THAT SEI IS DEAD.
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!
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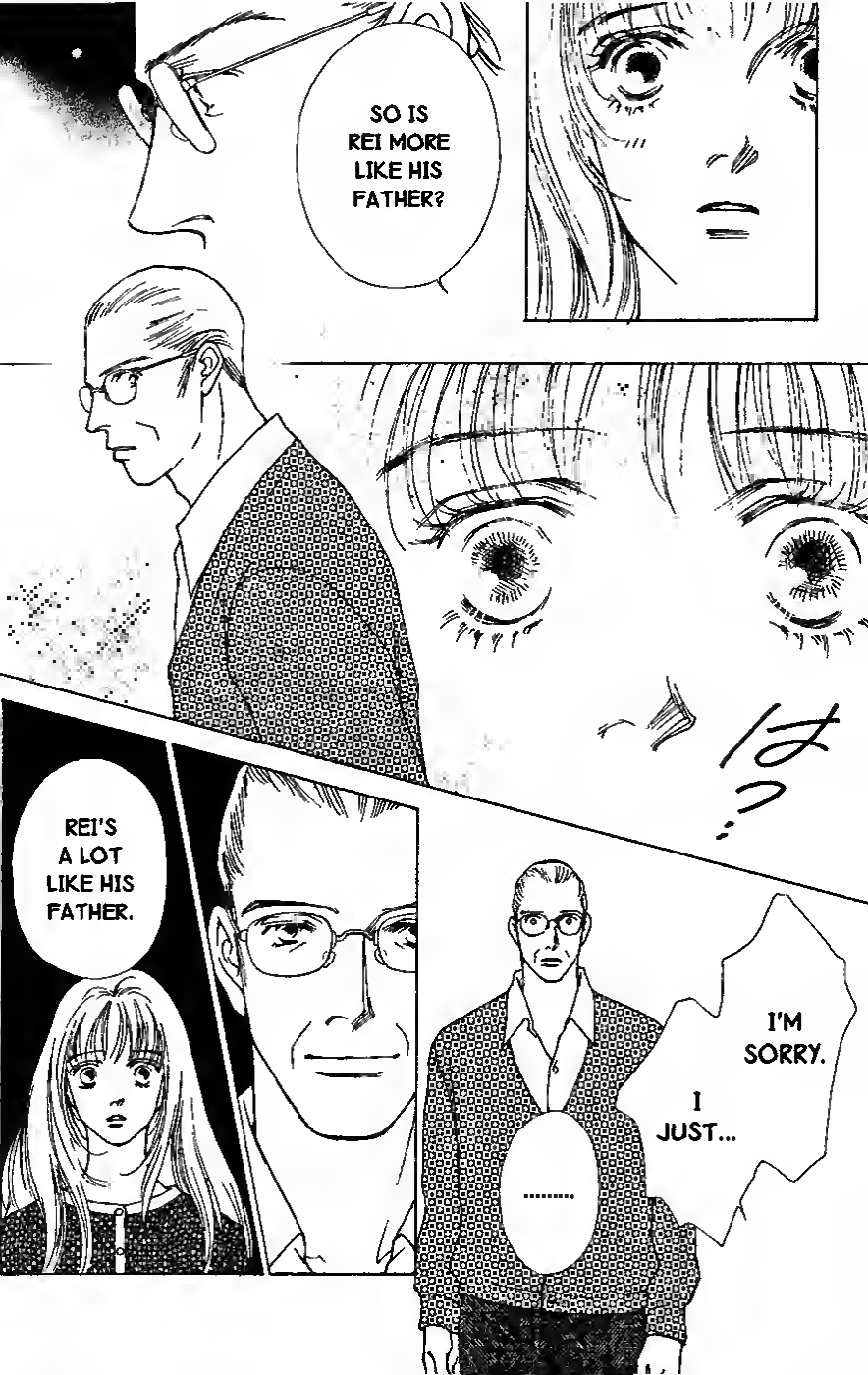
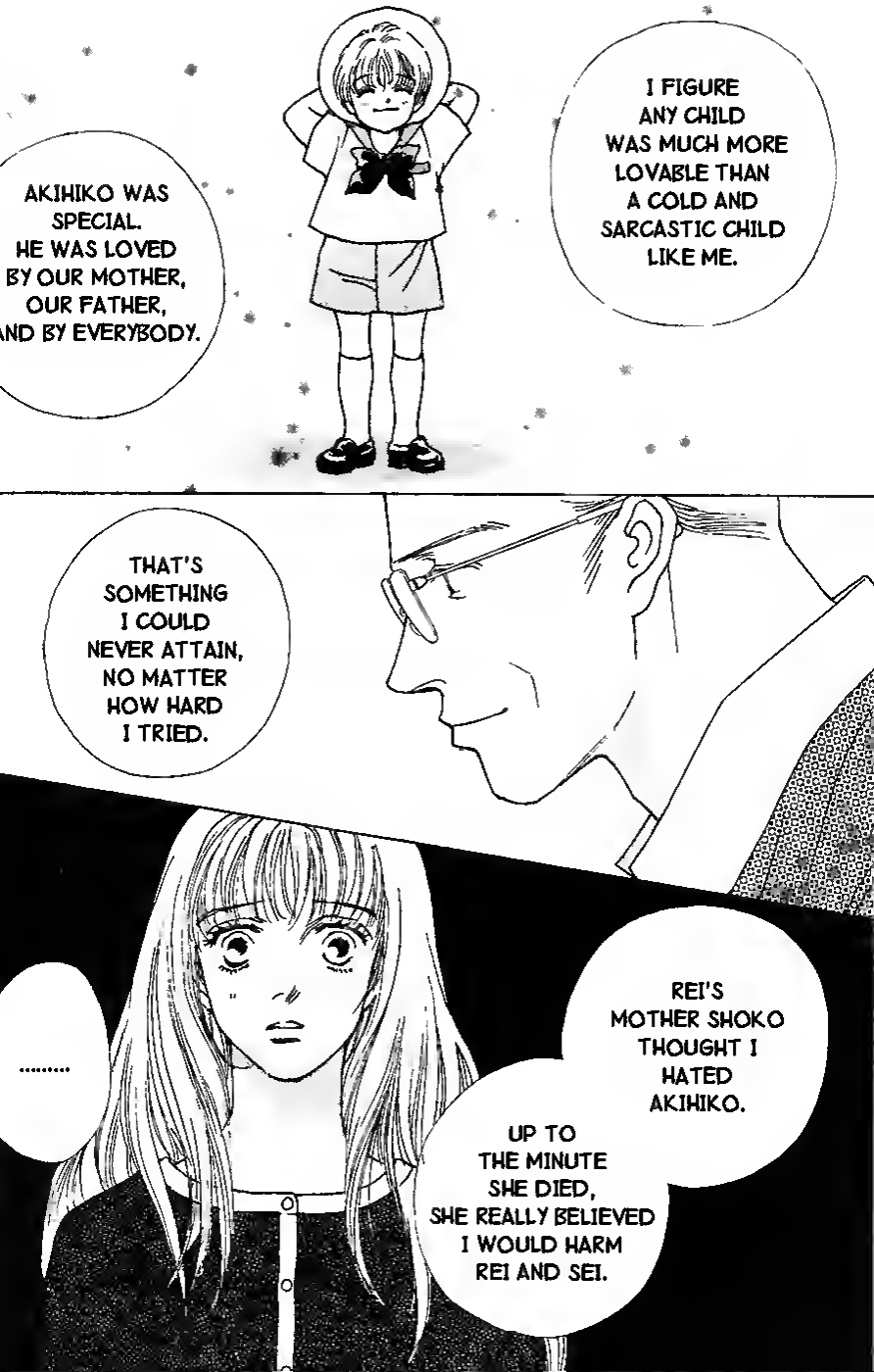
I CAN ONLY THINK ABOUT REI RIGHT NOW.
I WANT TO ERASE EVERYTHING THAT WOULD CAUSE HIM STRESS AND WORRY.

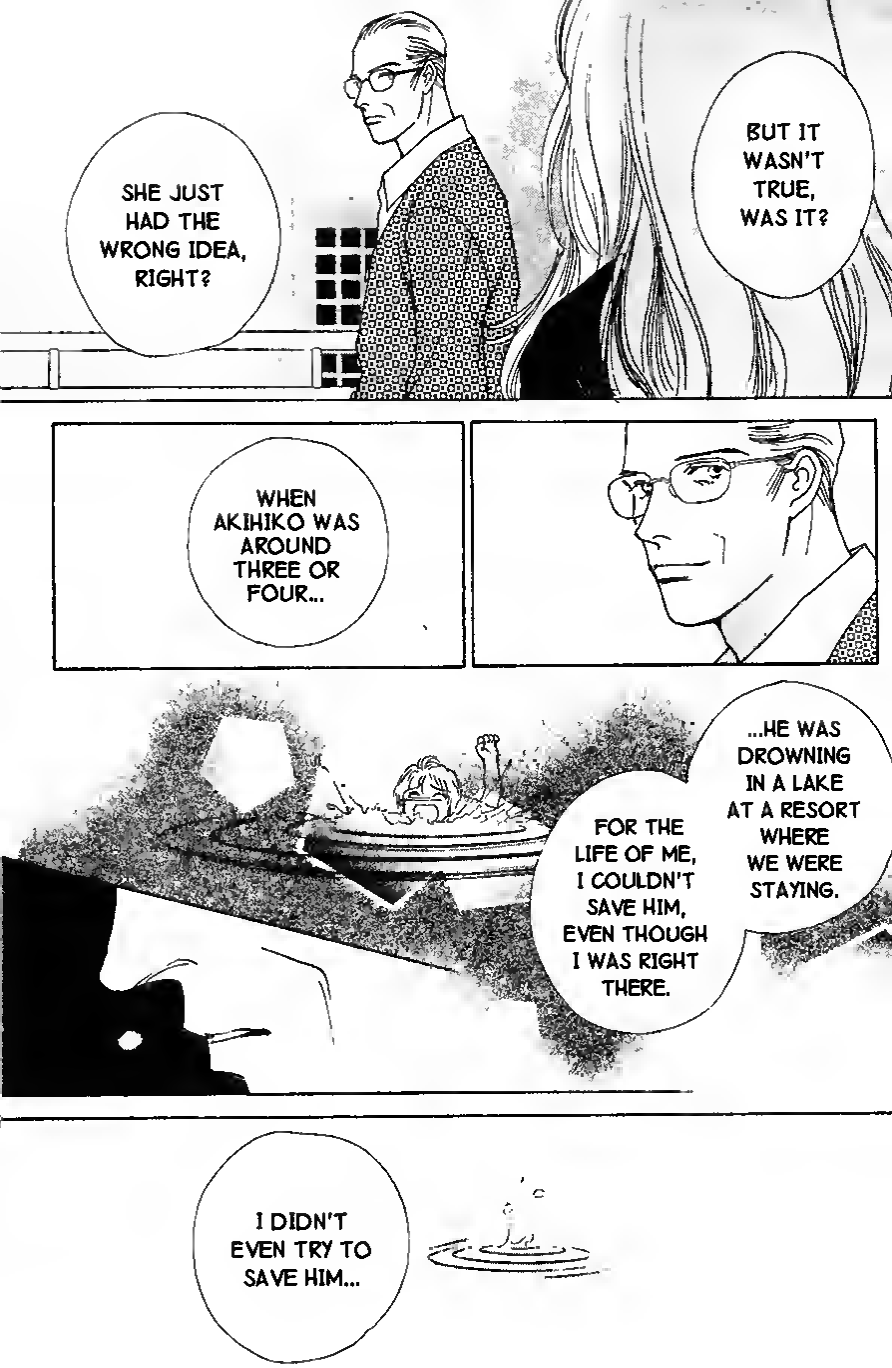
YOU'RE ALONE, KIRA? WHERE'S REI?
FATHER?
OH.
I'M GOING TO THE PSYCHIATRIC CENTER. DON'T TELL MY FATHER WHERE I WENT. HE'LL WORRY.
DID YOU WANT TO TALK TO HIM?
NO, IT'S NOTHING SERIOUS. I THOUGHT WE COULD VISIT HIS MOTHER'S GRAVE.
OH, UM, HE WENT TO A FRIEND'S HOUSE.
I SEE.

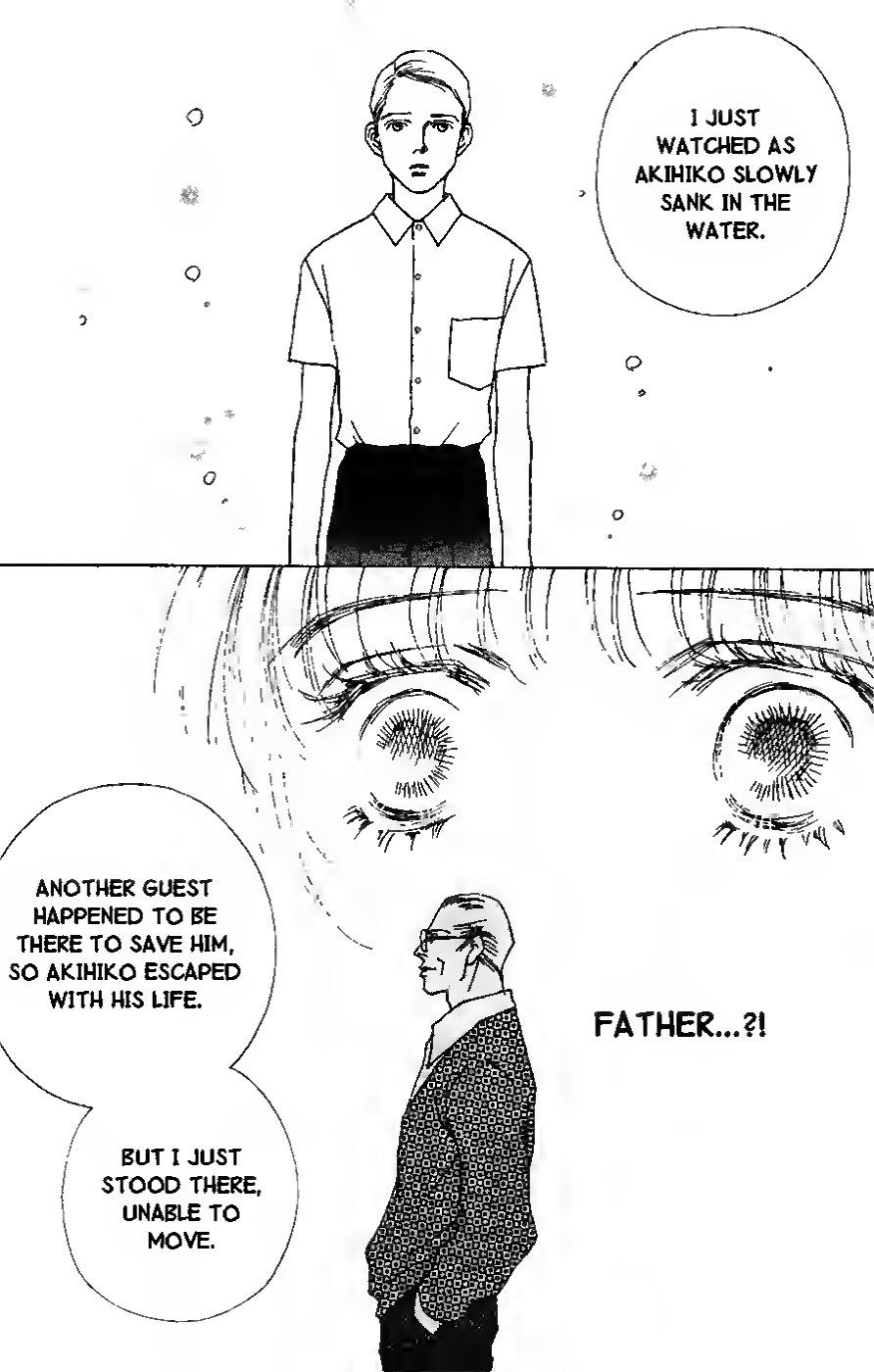
IS THAT SEI'S SKETCH-BOOK?
!
IF SEI WERE ALIVE,
YOU TWO WOULD HAVE PROBABLY HAD A LOT TO TALK ABOUT.
I'M SORRY FOR JUST BRINGING IT OUT HERE LIKE THIS...
NO, IT'S FINE.
I DIDN'T CARE THAT WE WEREN'T HIS REAL CHILDREN.
SEI PROBABLY GOT THAT FROM HIS MOTHER. SHOKO WAS ALWAYS DRAWING DESIGNS FOR HER EMBROIDERY.


SO IS REI MORE LIKE HIS FATHER?
は？
REI'S A LOT LIKE HIS FATHER.
I'M SORRY.
I JUST...
.....

HE'S BECOMING MORE LIKE AKIHIKO EVERY DAY.
EVEN MY FATHER, WHO WAS A STRICT MAN, WAS MORE GENTLE WITH AKIHIKO.
AKIHIKO HAD A STRANGE CHARM. HE WAS PROBABLY BORN WITH IT.
WHEN HE WAS AROUND, EVERYTHING WAS PEACEFUL.


AKIHIKO WAS SPECIAL. HE WAS LOVED BY OUR MOTHER, OUR FATHER, AND BY EVERYBODY.
I FIGURE ANY CHILD WAS MUCH MORE LOVABLE THAN A COLD AND SARCASTIC CHILD LIKE ME.
THAT'S SOMETHING I COULD NEVER ATTAIN, NO MATTER HOW HARD I TRIED.
.....
REI'S MOTHER SHOKO THOUGHT I HATED AKIHIKO.
UP TO THE MINUTE SHE DIED, SHE REALLY BELIEVED I WOULD HARM REI AND SEI.

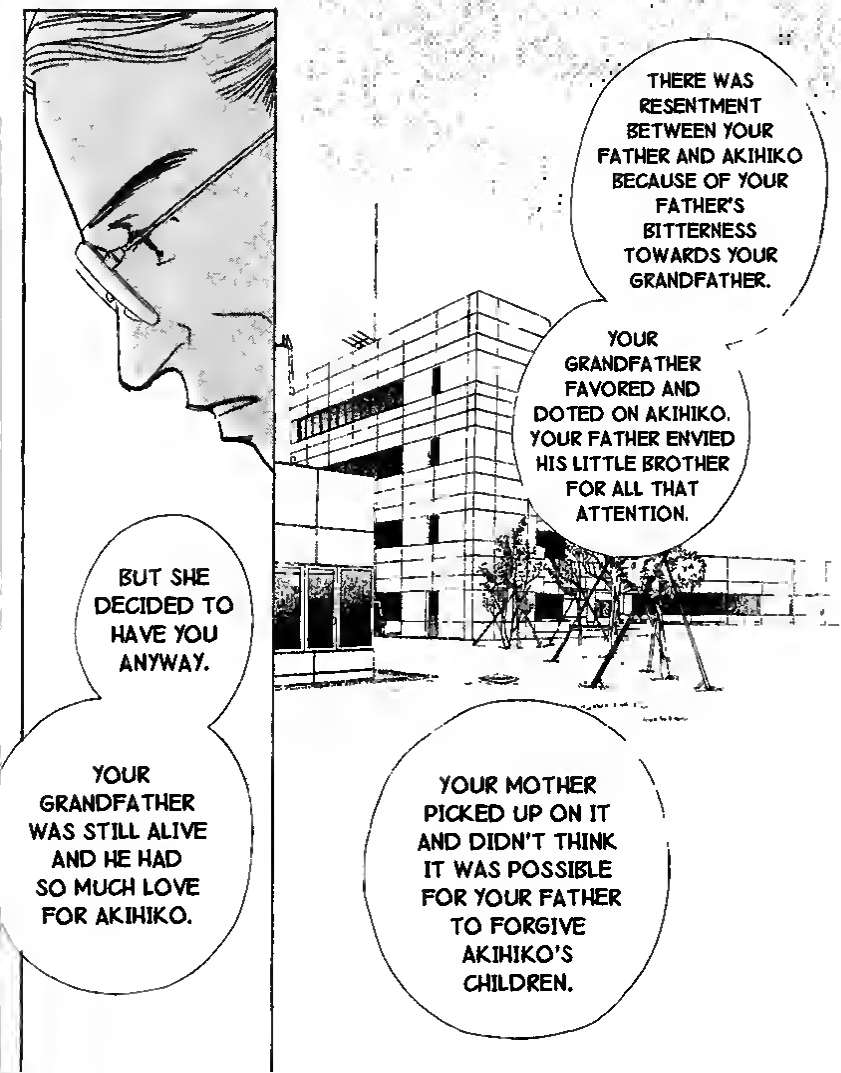

SHE JUST HAD THE WRONG IDEA, RIGHT?
BUT IT WASN'T TRUE, WAS IT?
WHEN AKIHIKO WAS AROUND THREE OR FOUR...
...HE WAS DROWNING IN A LAKE AT A RESORT WHERE WE WERE STAYING.
FOR THE LIFE OF ME, I COULDN'T SAVE HIM, EVEN THOUGH I WAS RIGHT THERE.
I DIDN'T EVEN TRY TO SAVE HIM...


I JUST WATCHED AS AKIHIKO SLOWLY SANK IN THE WATER.
ANOTHER GUEST HAPPENED TO BE THERE TO SAVE HIM, SO AKIHIKO ESCAPED WITH HIS LIFE.
BUT I JUST STOOD THERE, UNABLE TO MOVE.
FATHER...?!

WHEN MY FATHER FOUND OUT, HE LOST IT AND SAID I WAS A DISGRACE.
HE THOUGHT I WAS A MONSTER-- A BROTHER WHO COULD JUST WATCH HIS BROTHER DIE.
I HAD NO INTENTION OF JUST WATCHING HIM DIE.
I DON'T KNOW WHY I DIDN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.
THAT'S SOMETHING I STILL HAVEN'T COME TO TERMS WITH...
.....

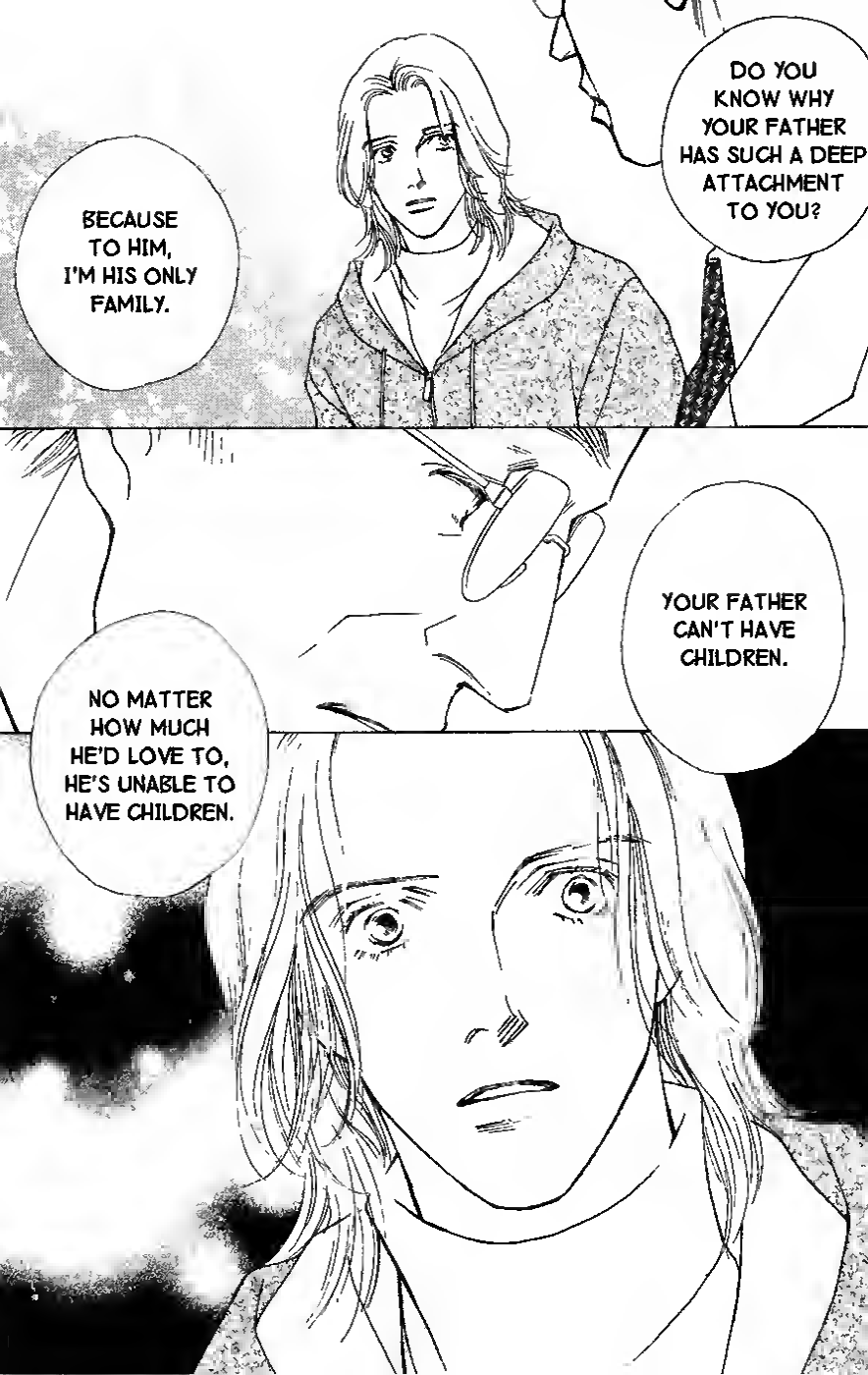
...WHETHER I REALLY HAVE HATRED TOWARDS MY OWN BROTHER...

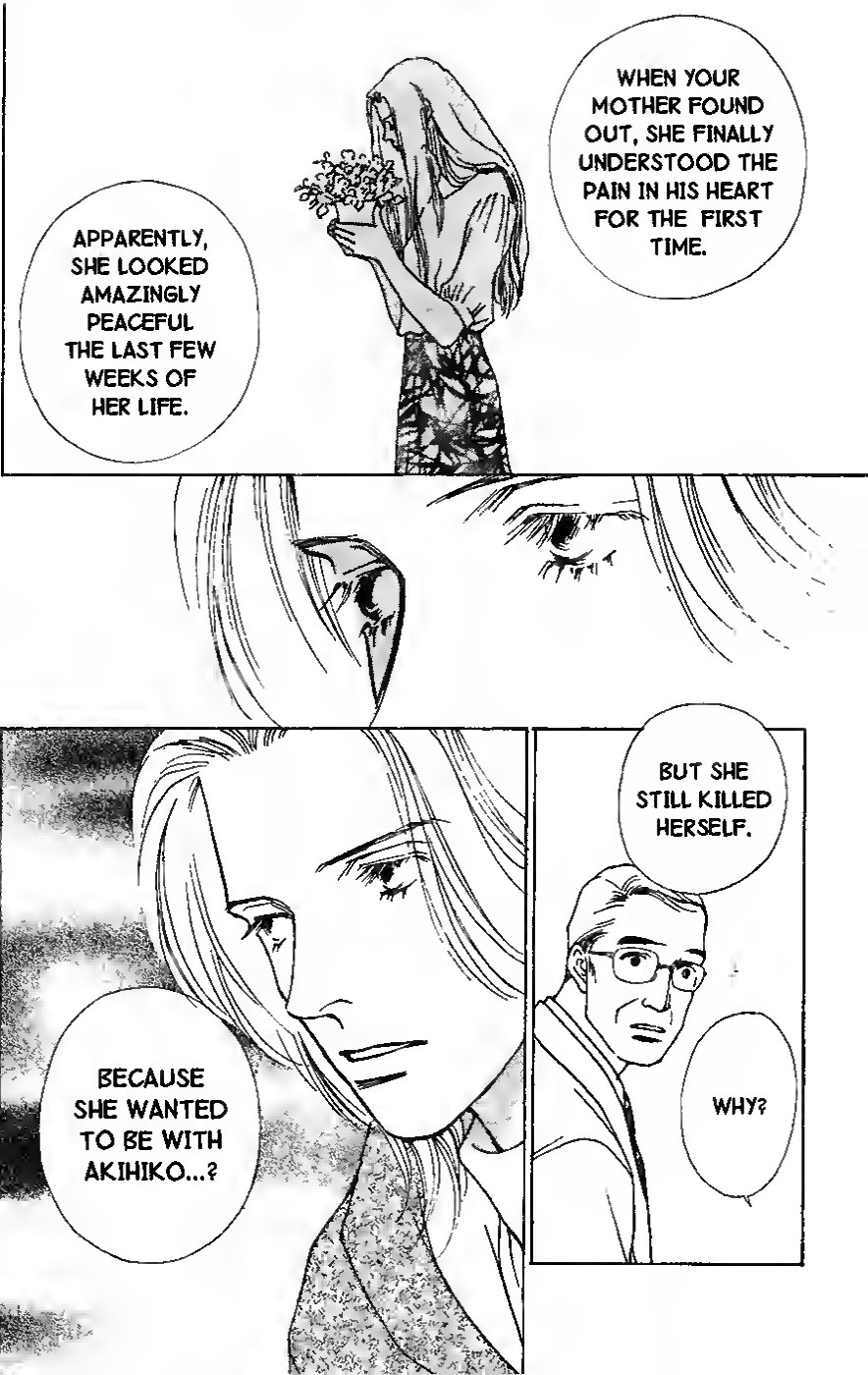
...AND IF I COULD RAISE THE CHILDREN HE LEFT BEHIND AS MY OWN.



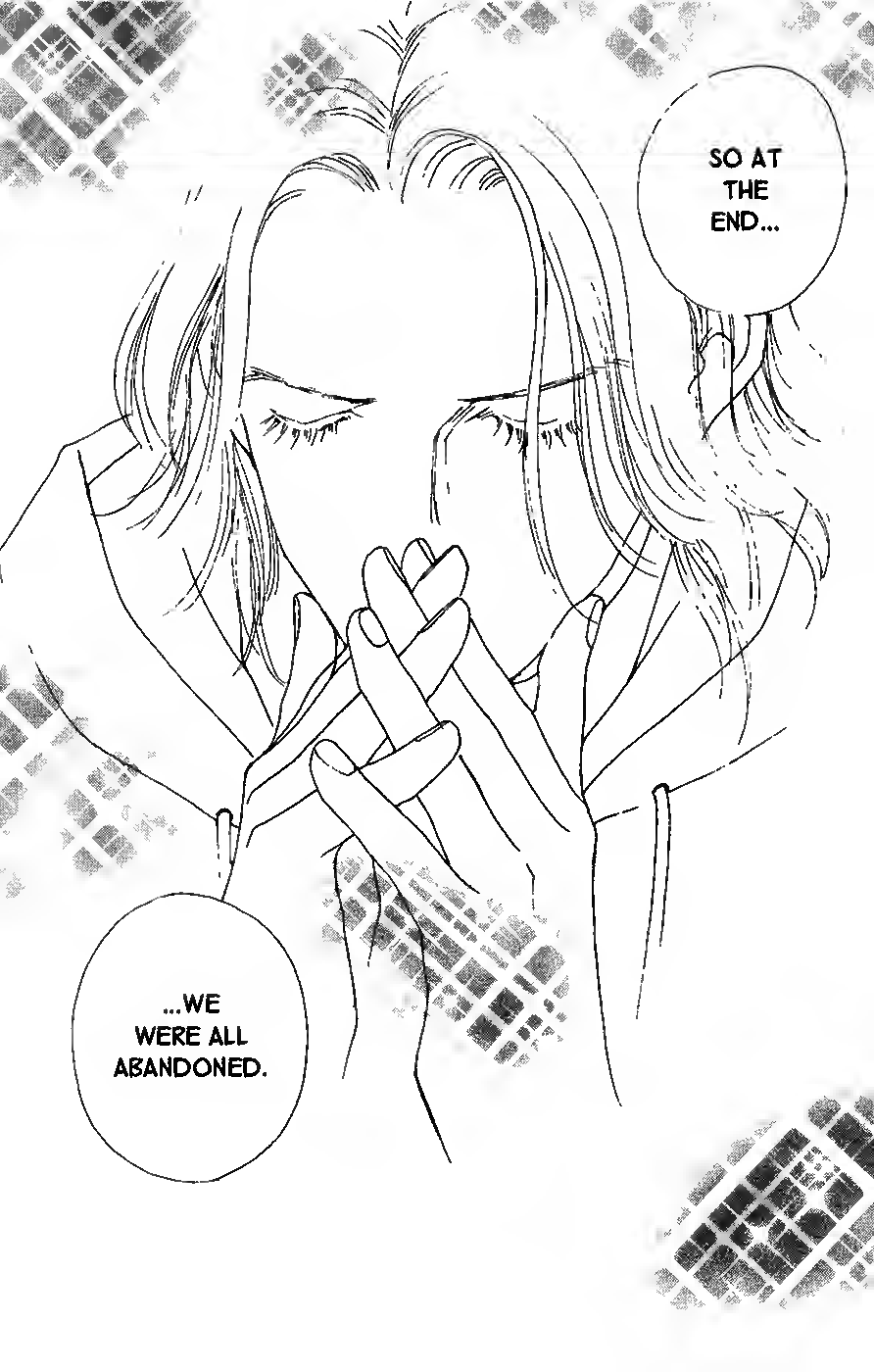
BUT MY GRANDFATHER DIED.
AND MY MOTHER, LOSING HER ONE STRONG SUPPORTER, SUDDENLY FELT AN EXTREME SENSE OF FEAR, WHICH RATTLED HER NERVES.
THEN SHE KILLED HERSELF.
IS THAT WHAT HAPPENED?
IT PROBABLY HAD TO DO WITH MENDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN YOUR FATHER AND AKIHIKO.
WE STARTED BY DISPELLING YOUR MOTHER'S FEARS.
WE BELIEVED YOUR MOTHER WOULD GET BETTER IF SHE WAS CONVINCED OF YOUR FATHER'S UNCONDITIONAL BOND TO HIS BROTHER.

SO MY FATHER DIDN'T HAVE A GRUDGE AGAINST HIS BROTHER?
HONESTLY, WE DON'T KNOW HIS TRUE FEELINGS TOWARDS HIS BROTHER.
HE WAS ALREADY GONE BY THEN. BUT...
...WE KNOW THAT HIS LOVE FOR YOU TWO WAS REAL.
ENOUGH FOR MY MOTHER TO BELIEVE IT?
.....

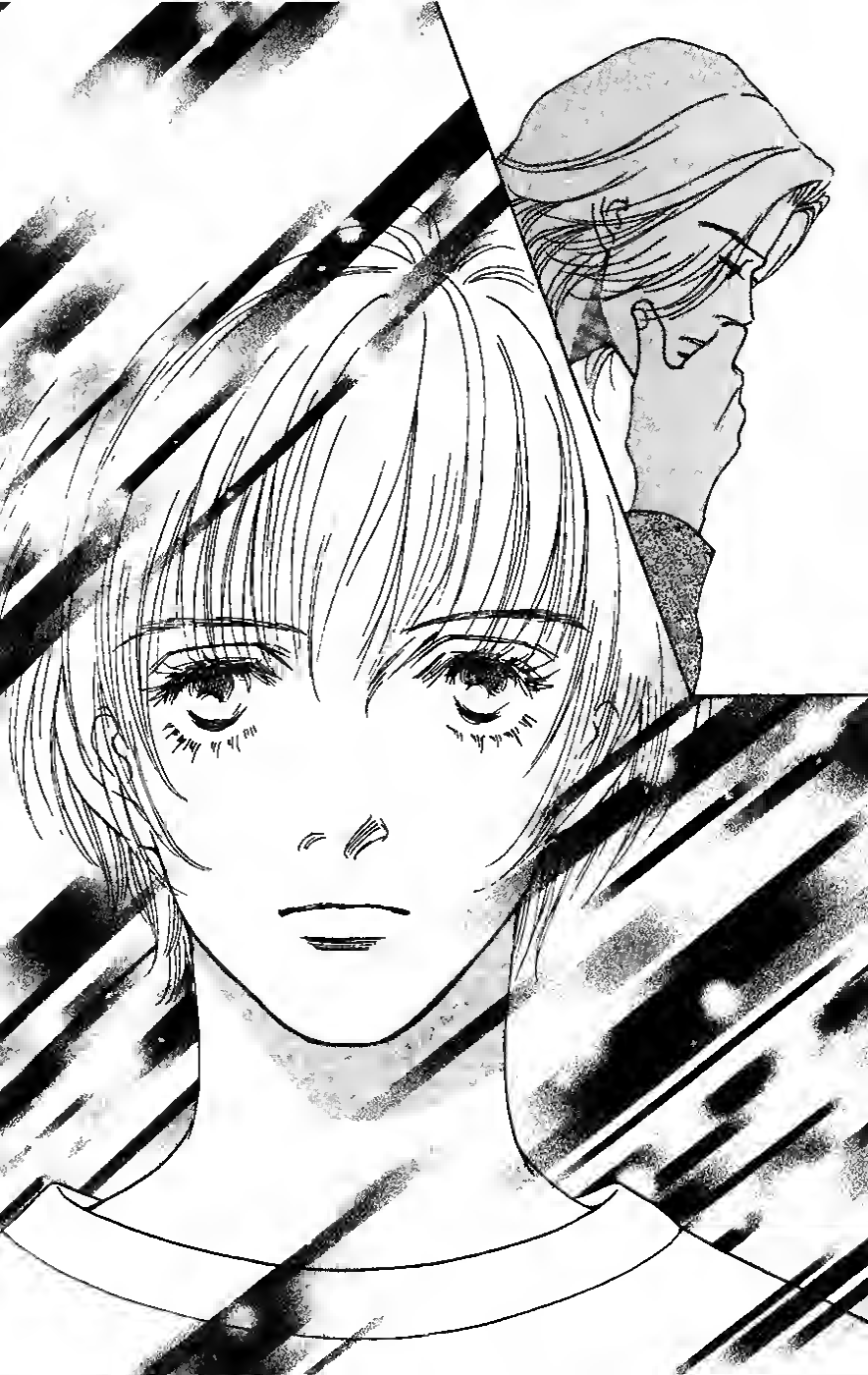

DO YOU KNOW WHY YOUR FATHER HAS SUCH A DEEP ATTACHMENT TO YOU?
BECAUSE TO HIM, I'M HIS ONLY FAMILY.
YOUR FATHER CAN'T HAVE CHILDREN.
NO MATTER HOW MUCH HE'D LOVE TO, HE'S UNABLE TO HAVE CHILDREN.


WHEN YOUR MOTHER FOUND OUT, SHE FINALLY UNDERSTOOD THE PAIN IN HIS HEART FOR THE FIRST TIME.
APPARENTLY, SHE LOOKED AMAZINGLY PEACEFUL THE LAST FEW WEEKS OF HER LIFE.
BUT SHE STILL KILLED HERSELF.
WHY?
BECAUSE SHE WANTED TO BE WITH AKIHIKO...?

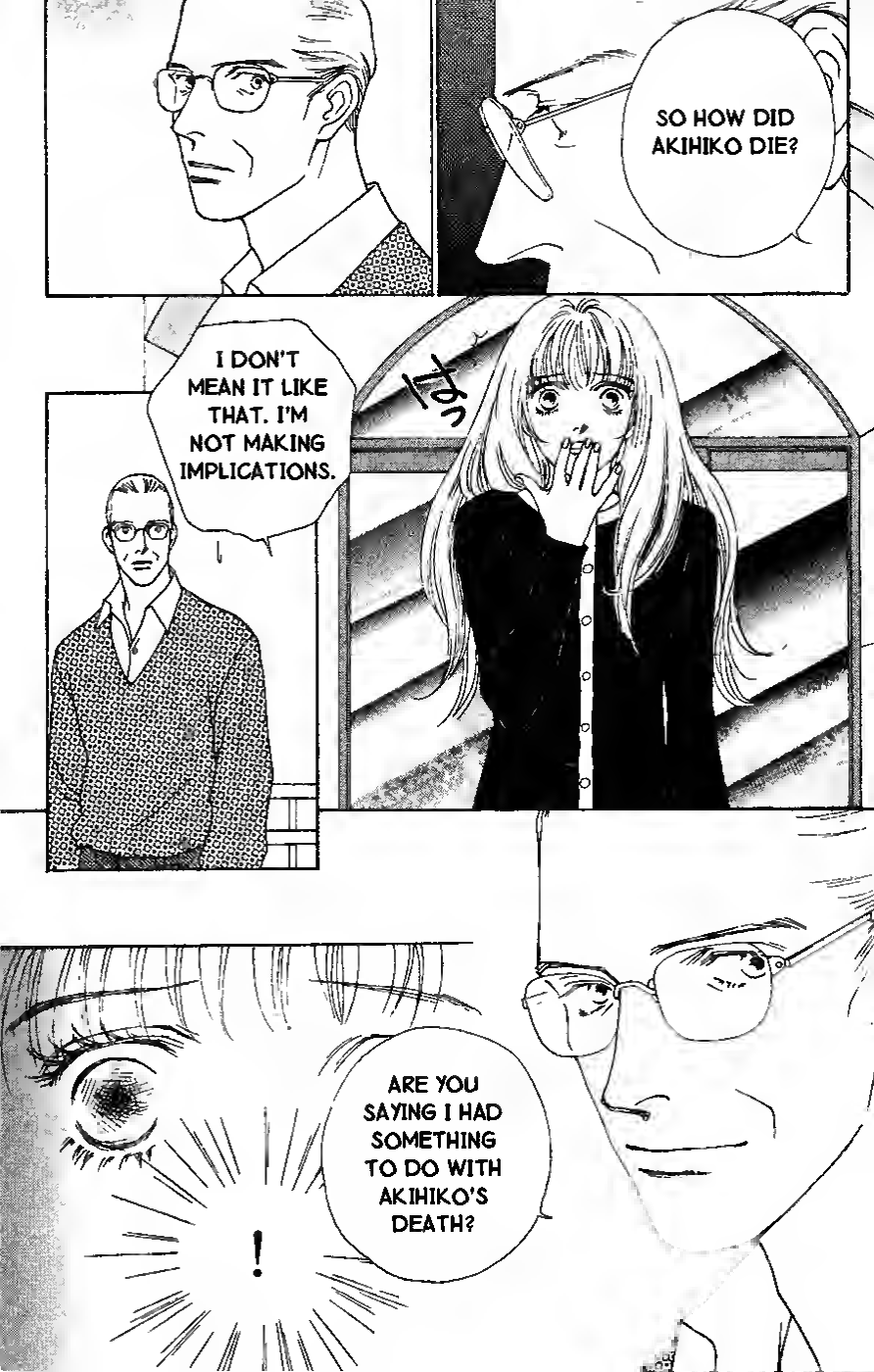
RATHER THAN STAY WITH US AND MY FATHER.
SHE WANTED TO BE WITH A GUY WHO WAS DEAD?
REI...
HOW STUPID.

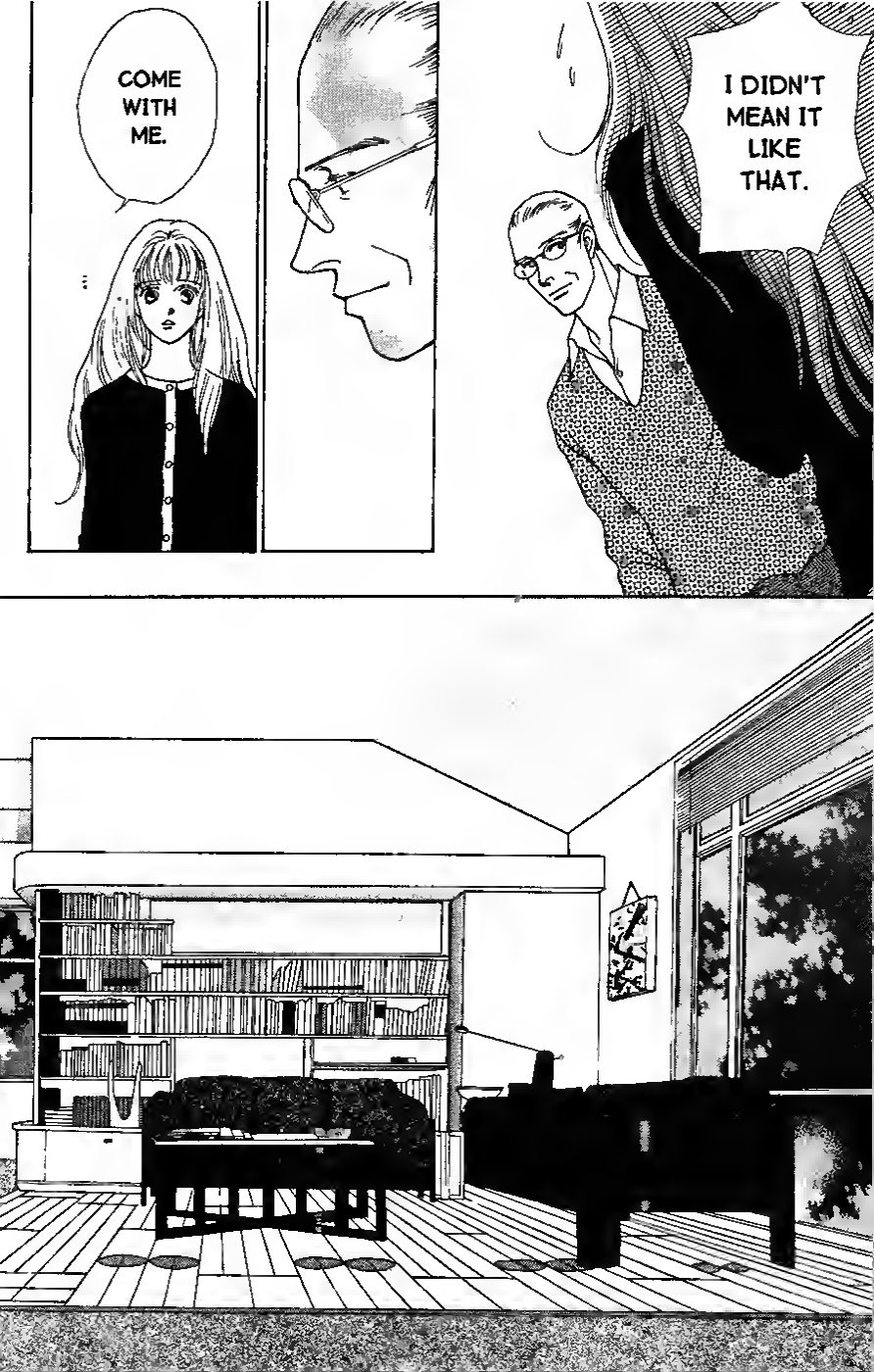

SO AT THE END...
...WE WERE ALL ABANDONED.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
HURRY UP, MASAO.

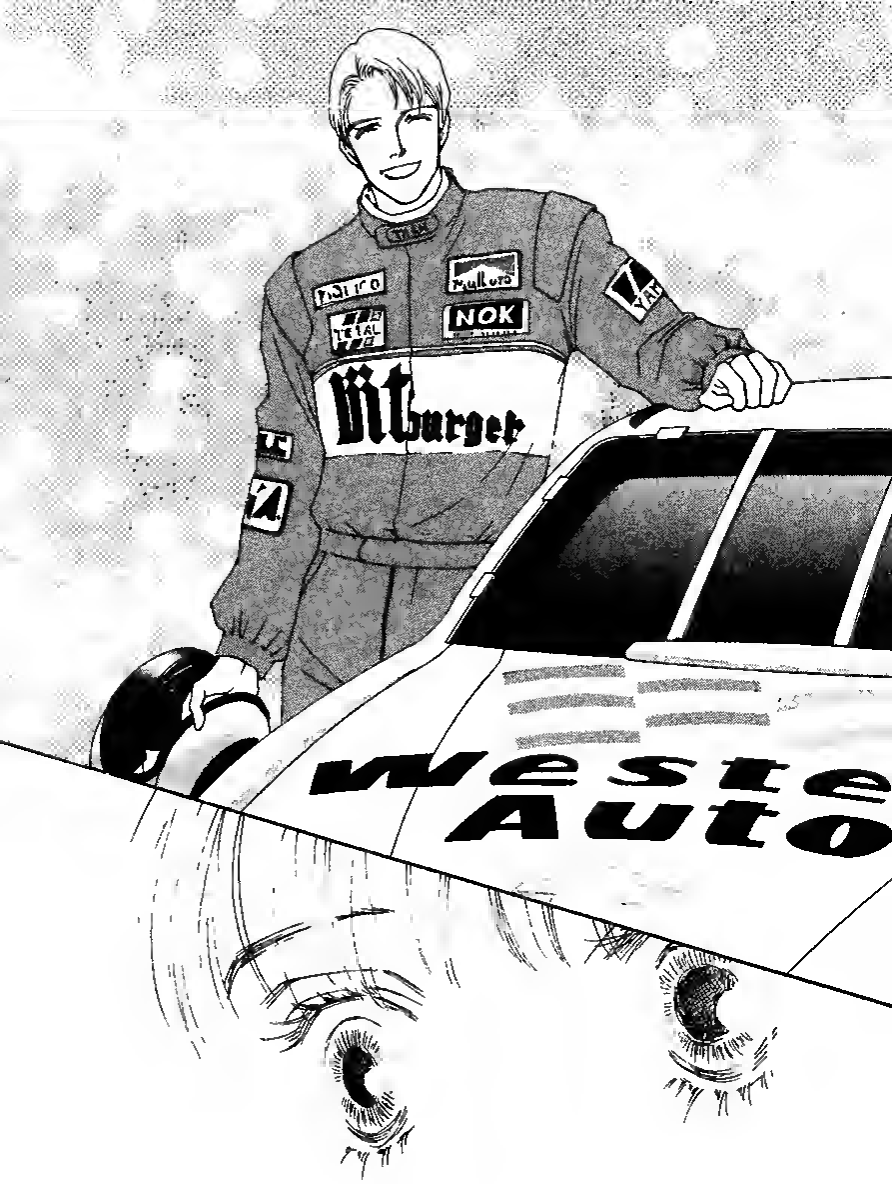


IT WOULD BE A LIE TO SAY I DON'T HOLD A GRUDGE AGAINST MY BROTHER.
THERE WERE MANY TIMES WHEN I THOUGHT, IF ONLY AKIHIKO WEREN'T HERE...
BUT TO THINK THAT AKIHIKO WOULD PASS AWAY IN SUCH A WAY...
OH...


SO HOW DID AKIHIKO DIE?
I DON'T MEAN IT LIKE THAT. I'M NOT MAKING IMPLICATIONS.
ARE YOU SAYING I HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH AKIHIKO'S DEATH?
!


COME WITH ME.
I DIDN'T MEAN IT LIKE THAT.

THIS IS MY STUDY.
HAVE A SEAT.
LOOK AT THIS.
AN ALBUM...?
THIS IS REI AND SEI'S FATHER.



WHAT?!!

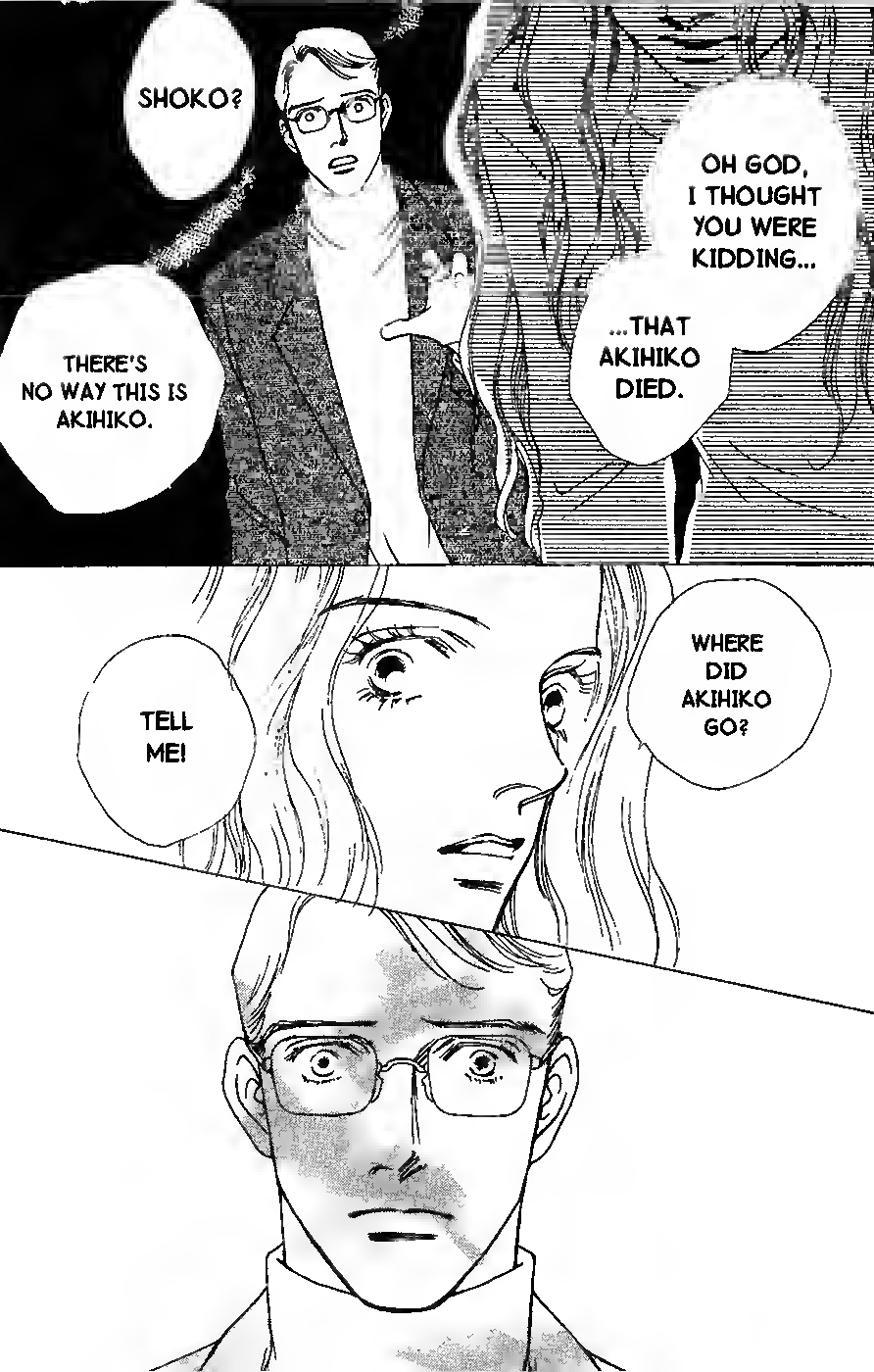
A RACING UNIFORM?!
IF AKIHIKO SAID HE WANTED TO RACE, FATHER LET HIM GET HIS LICENSE.
IF HE SAID HE WANTED A CAR, FATHER BOUGHT HIM A RACE CAR.
MY FATHER WAS SOFT WHEN IT CAME TO AKIHIKO.
HE ALLOWED HIM TO DO WHATEVER HE WANTED.
HE GOT WHATEVER HE WANTED... HE WAS ALWAYS SO CAREFREE.

WHAT AN EASYGOING LIFE...
THEN TO END UP DYING...
...AS A RESULT OF DOING WHATEVER YOU WANTED.
AKIHIKO WAS IN A CAR THAT EXPLODED INTO FLAMES.

LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU!
AKI-HIKO!
AKI-HIKO!
MA'AM!!
WOMEN SHOULDN'T BE IN HERE.
!

SHOKO.
STOP! IT'S BETTER IF YOU DON'T SEE HIM!

WHAT?
IS THIS...?
IT'S ALL BLACK.
HOW STRANGE.

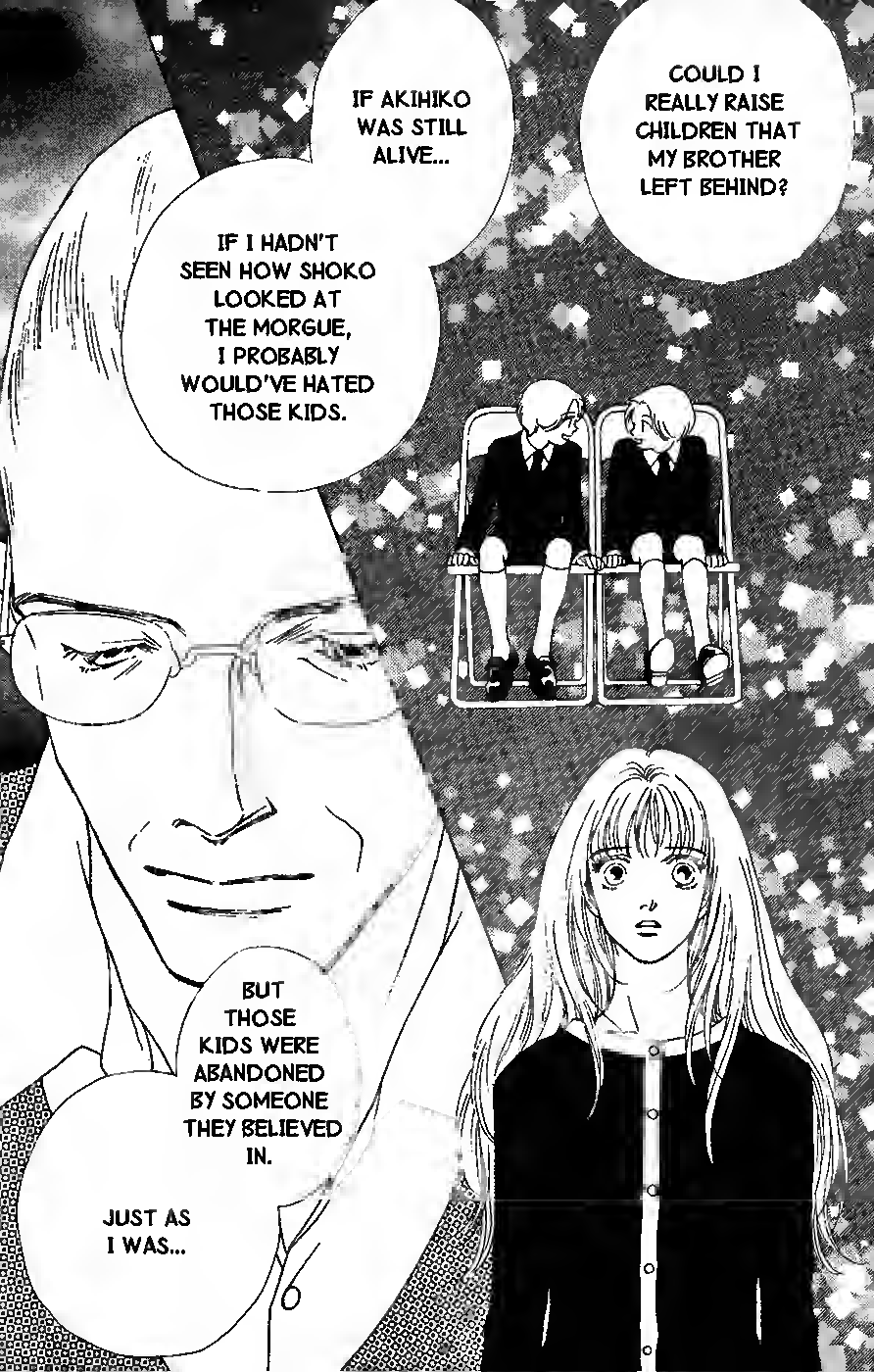

SHOKO?
THERE'S NO WAY THIS IS AKIHIKO.
OH GOD, I THOUGHT YOU WERE KIDDING...
...THAT AKIHIKO DIED.
TELL ME!
WHERE DID AKIHIKO GO?

GET AHOLD OF YOUR SELF!
YOU'RE IN DENIAL!
SHOKO!
SHOKO, YOU...
IT'S AKIHIKO, AFTER ALL. HE'S PROBABLY PLAYING A JOKE ON US.
WHERE IS HE?
WHERE'S HE HIDING? HUH?
AKIHIKO CRASHED INTO A FENCE DURING THE RACE AND DIED!
HIS CAR BURNED UP WITH HIM INSIDE IT.

WAAA AAH!!
URR...
URGH...

NOOOOOOOOOO!!
NO!

I FOUND OUT LATER THAT SHOKO WAS PREGNANT.
THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT IT WAS AKIHIKO'S CHILD.


IF AKIHIKO WAS STILL ALIVE...
COULD I REALLY RAISE CHILDREN THAT MY BROTHER LEFT BEHIND?
IF I HADN'T SEEN HOW SHOKO LOOKED AT THE MORGUE, I PROBABLY WOULD'VE HATED THOSE KIDS.
BUT THOSE KIDS WERE ABANDONED BY SOMEONE THEY BELIEVED IN.
JUST AS I WAS...

SHOKO DIDN'T DIE BECAUSE SHE WAS SICK.

SHE WANTED TO BE WITH AKIHIKO, SO SHE KILLED HERSELF.

I'M AFRAID REI MAY HAVE FOUND THAT OUT ALREADY.

I THINK HE KNOWS HOW HIS MOTHER REALLY DIED.

I PRICKED MYSELF WITH A NEEDLE AND MY MOTHER KISSED IT.

WOW, WHAT A NICE STORY.

REALLY...

IS IT REALLY A GOOD STORY?

I WANTED TO PROTECT LITTLE REI AND SEI IF I COULD.
THEIR FATHER WAS DEAD, AND THEIR MOTHER WAS IN NO SHAPE TO BE A MOTHER.
BUT...
...I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO BE CLOSE TO THEM AS A FATHER.
I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO BE A FATHER.

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, REI?
I'M ALL RIGHT.
I'M FINE.
SO THAT'S WHAT IT WAS.
THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED.
WHY WERE WE BORN?
WHY DID MY FATHER RAISE US EVEN THOUGH WE WEREN'T HIS REAL CHILDREN?

I WAS THE ONE WHO SUGGESTED HE SEND YOU TO YOUR RELATIVES IN LOS ANGELES.
YOUR FATHER WAS TRYING TO RAISE YOU TWO ON HIS OWN.
BUT HE WAS MORE DEVASTATED THAN YOU WERE BY YOUR MOTHER'S DEATH.
!
YOUR FATHER IS A VERY STRONG AND ADMIRABLE MAN.
UNTIL HE RESOLVED HIS FEELINGS,
I DISCOURAGED HIM FROM LIVING WITH YOU.
BUT PEOPLE AREN'T ALWAYS AS STRONG AS THEY LOOK.

YOUR FATHER IS ONLY HUMAN.
BE WELL.
I'LL PRAY THAT YOU WON'T EVER COME BACK HERE AGAIN.

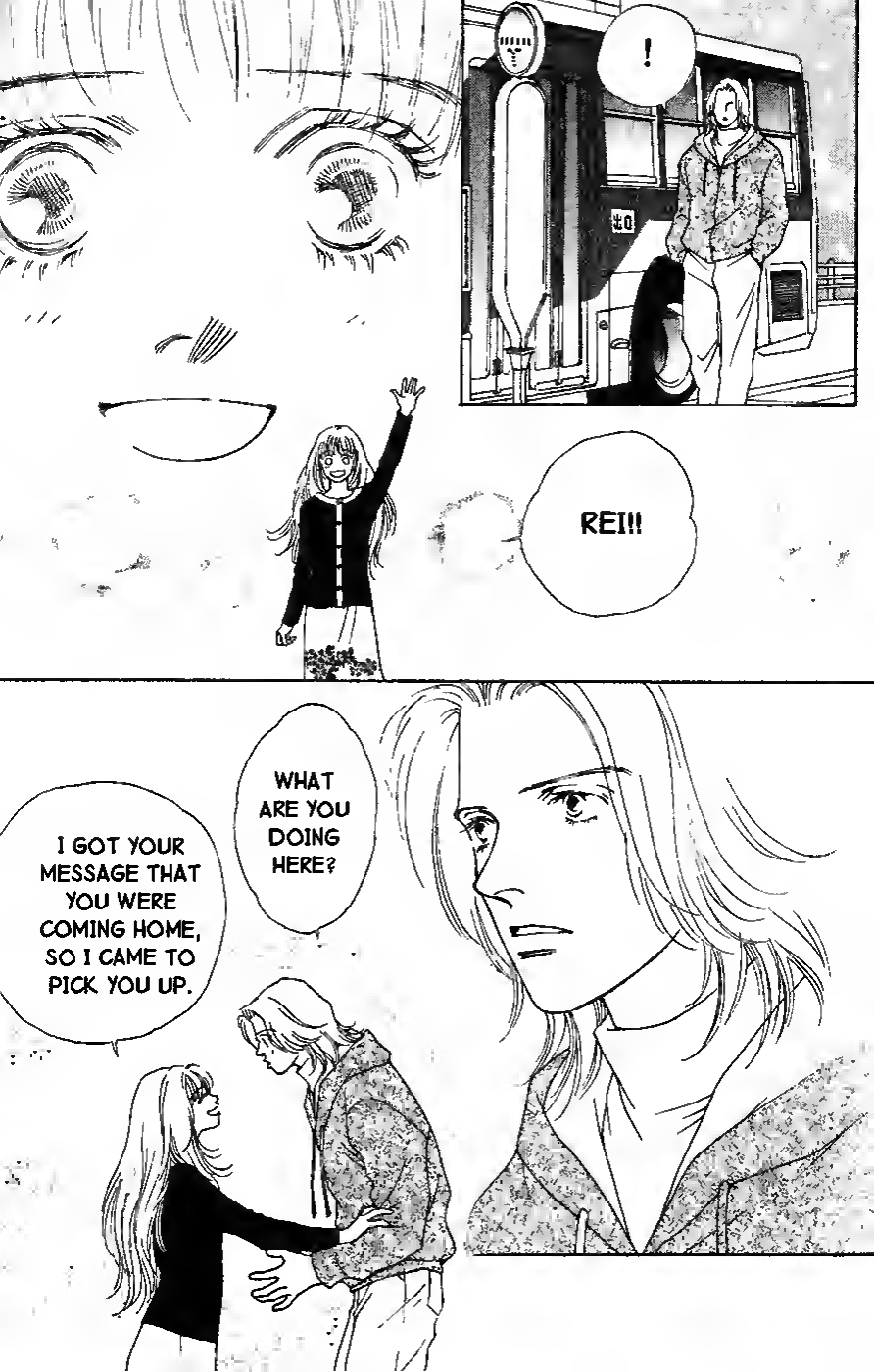
SEEING YOU NOW, I DON'T THINK I NEED TO WORRY.
BY THE WAY, IS THERE A MASAO KIRISHIMA HERE?
KIRI-SHIMA?
OH YES, THAT BOY.
ARE YOU AN ACQUAIN-TANCE OF HIS?
YES... SOME-WHAT.
HE'S NOT UNDER MY CARE, SO I DON'T KNOW TOO MUCH ABOUT HIM.
I THINK HE'S GOING THROUGH PSYCHO-THERAPY.

REI.
SEE YOU.
DO YOU WANT TO SEE HIM?
!
NO.
I'M NOT... A FRIEND OF HIS.
A HUMAN LIFE LASTS SUCH A SMALL AMOUNT OF TIME.
BUT HUMAN MINDS ARE LIMITLESS, LIKE SPACE.

AS A PSYCHIATRIST, THIS IS UNORTHODOX FOR ME TO SAY,
BUT... IT MAY BE FOOLISH FOR A PERSON TO EVEN TRY TO DELIBERATELY AFFECT ANOTHER PERSON'S MIND.
MAYBE I HAVE NO RIGHT TO BE CALLED A DOCTOR.

HUMAN MINDS ARE LIMITLESS, LIKE SPACE.

IT MAY BE FOOLISH FOR A PERSON
TO EVEN TRY TO DELIBERATELY AFFECT
ANOTHER PERSON'S MIND.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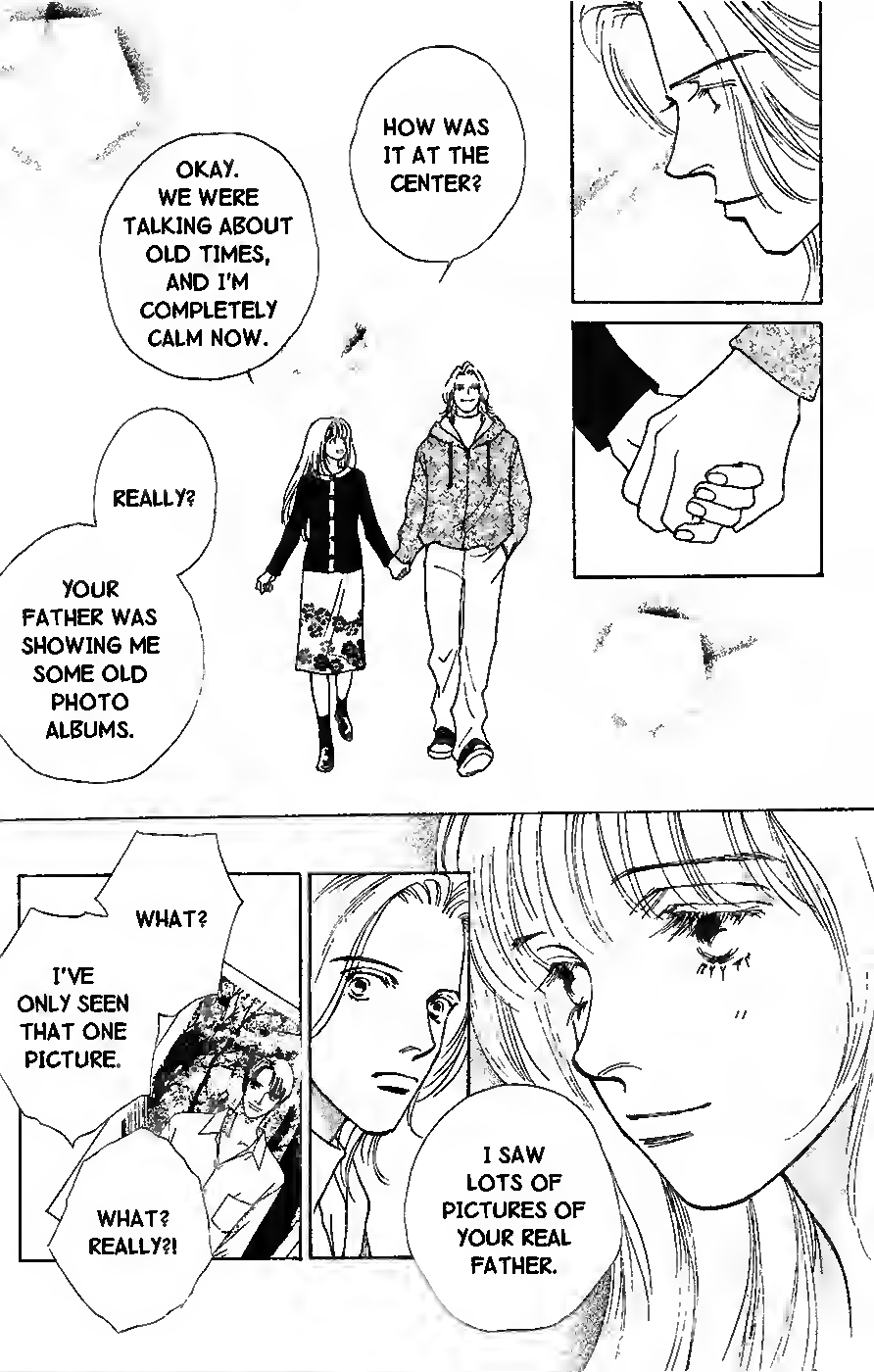
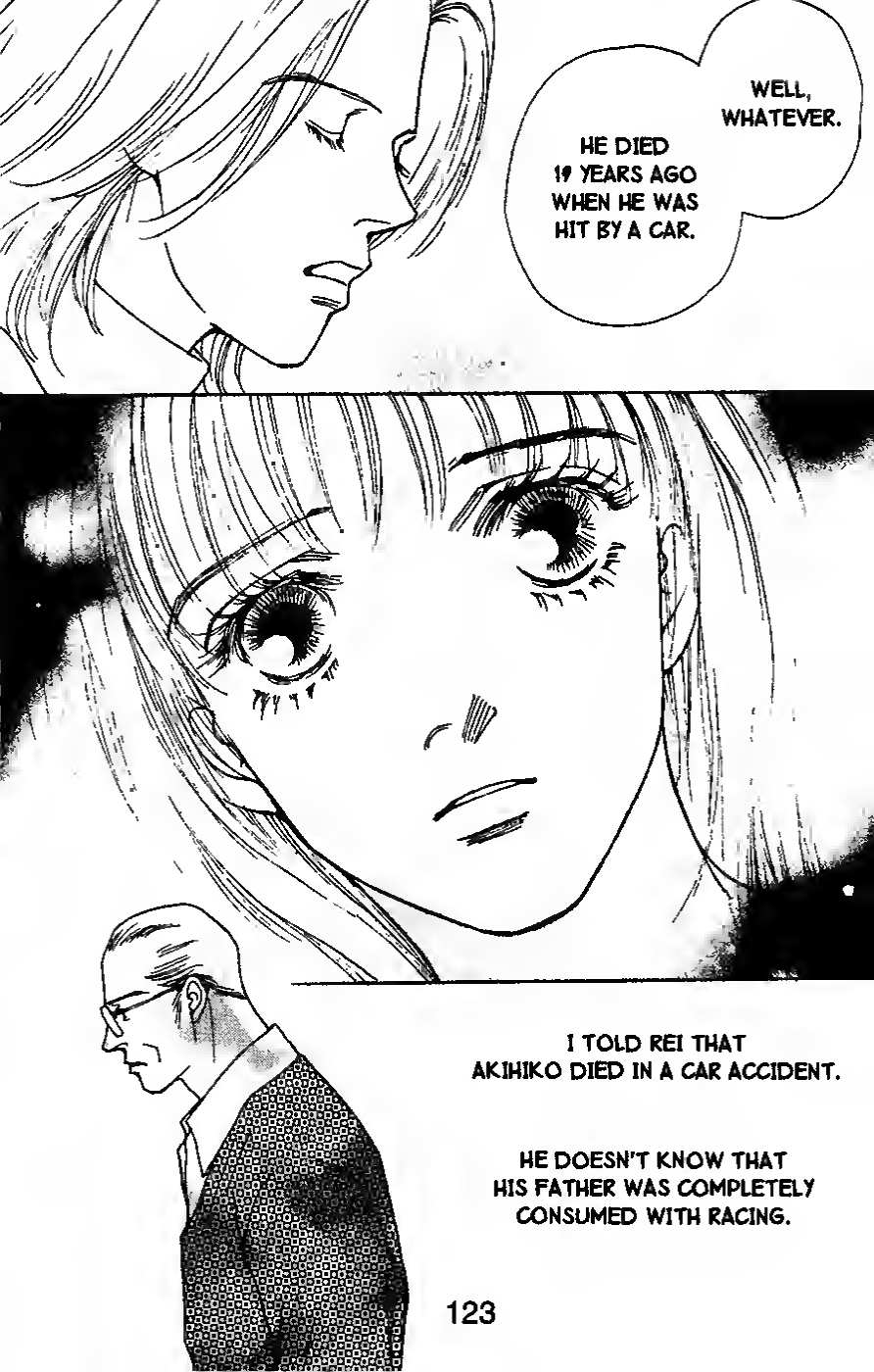
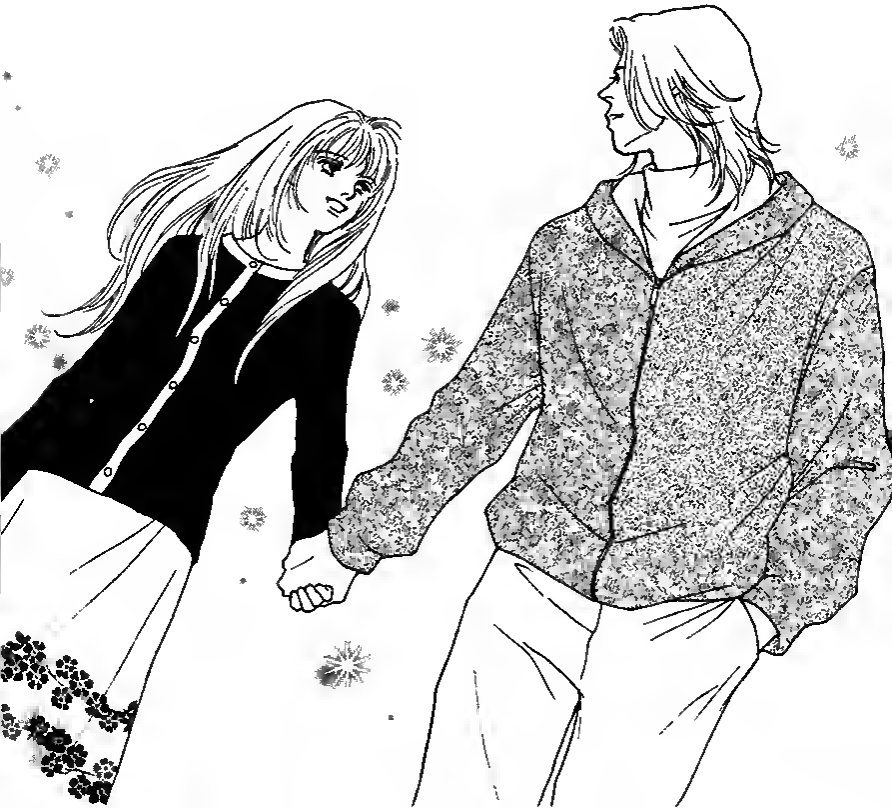
REI!!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I GOT YOUR MESSAGE THAT YOU WERE COMING HOME, SO I CAME TO PICK YOU UP.


HOW WAS IT AT THE CENTER?
OKAY. WE WERE TALKING ABOUT OLD TIMES, AND I'M COMPLETELY CALM NOW.
REALLY?
YOUR FATHER WAS SHOWING ME SOME OLD PHOTO ALBUMS.
WHAT?
I'VE ONLY SEEN THAT ONE PICTURE.
WHAT? REALLY?!
I SAW LOTS OF PICTURES OF YOUR REAL FATHER.

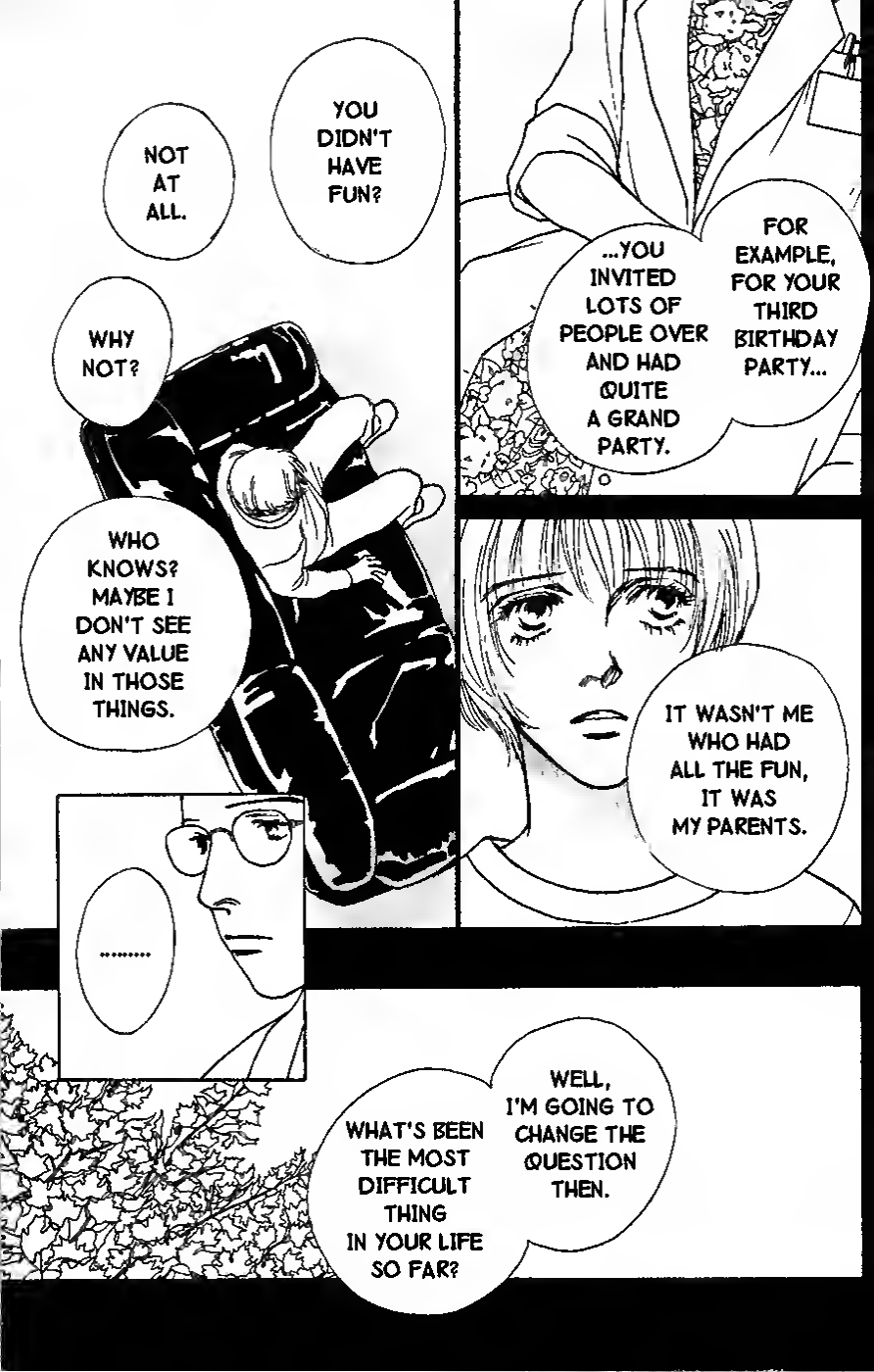

WELL, WHATEVER.
HE DIED 19 YEARS AGO WHEN HE WAS HIT BY A CAR.
I TOLD REI THAT AKIHIKO DIED IN A CAR ACCIDENT.
HE DOESN'T KNOW THAT HIS FATHER WAS COMPLETELY CONSUMED WITH RACING.

ALWAYS...
IF I CAN, I WANT TO...

...ALWAYS KEEP WALKING TOGETHER
LIKE THIS.



DO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT SOME FUN MEMORIES YOU HAD WITH YOUR PARENTS?
YOU WERE DOTED ON BY YOUR PARENTS WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER.
TODAY LET'S TRY TO GO BACK AND SEE IF WE CAN REMEMBER MORE.
FUN MEMORIES?

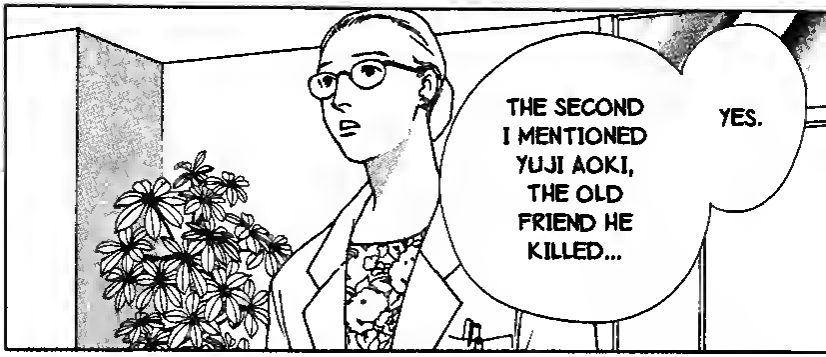

YOU DIDN'T HAVE FUN?
NOT AT ALL.
WHY NOT?
WHO KNOWS? MAYBE I DON'T SEE ANY VALUE IN THOSE THINGS.
.....
FOR EXAMPLE, FOR YOUR THIRD BIRTHDAY PARTY...
...YOU INVITED LOTS OF PEOPLE OVER AND HAD QUITE A GRAND PARTY.
IT WASN'T ME WHO HAD ALL THE FUN, IT WAS MY PARENTS.
WELL, I'M GOING TO CHANGE THE QUESTION THEN.
WHAT'S BEEN THE MOST DIFFICULT THING IN YOUR LIFE SO FAR?

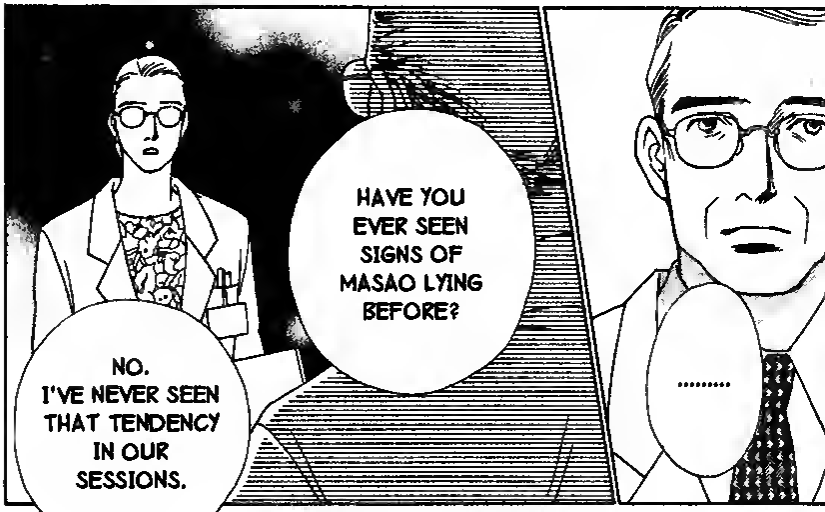
THAT WASN'T... DIFFICULT, EXACTLY.
YOU WERE BULLIED A LOT AS A CHILD.
CAN YOU TALK ABOUT THAT?
THEN WERE YOU SAD?
NO.
YOU'VE NEVER FELT SAD IN YOUR LIFE?
WHO KNOWS?
WHAT IS BEING SAD?

.....
WHAT IF YOUR PARENTS PASSED AWAY?

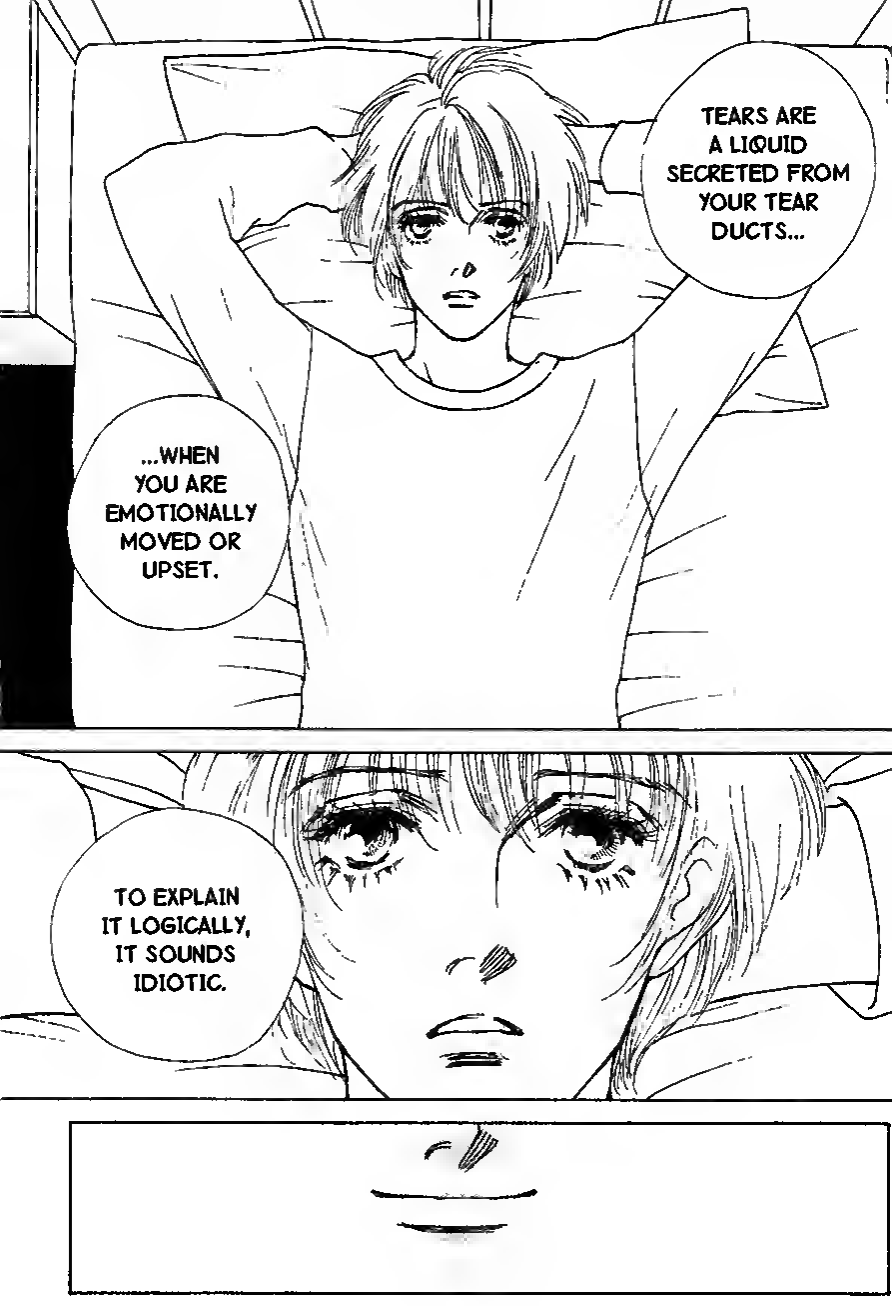
THEN WHAT ABOUT YUJI AOKI, WHO DIED...?

MASAO KIRISHIMA CRIED?


THE SECOND I MENTIONED YUJI AOKI, THE OLD FRIEND HE KILLED...
YES.


HAVE YOU EVER SEEN SIGNS OF MASAO LYING BEFORE?
.....
NO. I'VE NEVER SEEN THAT TENDENCY IN OUR SESSIONS.

I JUST THINK IT'S VERY INTERESTING THAT THIS BOY,
WHO'S BEEN COMPLETELY STOIC ABOUT EVERYTHING, FINALLY BROKE DOWN AND CRIED.
.....


TEARS ARE A LIQUID SECRETED FROM YOUR TEAR DUCTS...
...WHEN YOU ARE EMOTIONALLY MOVED OR UPSET.
TO EXPLAIN IT LOGICALLY, IT SOUNDS IDIOTIC.

BUT IT'S SO TYPICAL OF PEOPLE TO FALL FOR THESE SIMPLE TRICKS.

MARS

I WONDERED WHAT HAPPENED.
AFTER SUMMER VACATION, YOU NEVER SHOWED UP. THEN YOU TALKED ABOUT NOT TAKING YOUR EXAMS.
I'M SORRY I WORRIED YOU.

...I WAS REALLY SURPRISED TO HEAR...
...YOU AND REI GOT ENGAGED.
BUT...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT FLUNKING. BUT THE IMPORTANT THING IS YOUR EXAMS...
WELL, I'M SURE YOU'LL BE FINE.

YES. I'VE EXPLAINED MY SITUATION TO THE SCHOOL, AND THEY'VE ALLOWED ME TO RETURN...

YOU'RE ALREADY LIVING WITH HIM, RIGHT?

WELL, ACTUALLY, IT WAS REI'S FATHER WHO DID THE PERSUADING...

REI'S FAMILY IS REALLY DISTINGUISHED, AREN'T THEY?

I HEARD RUMORS THAT REI'S STUDYING LIKE CRAZY, TRYING TO GET INTO COLLEGE.

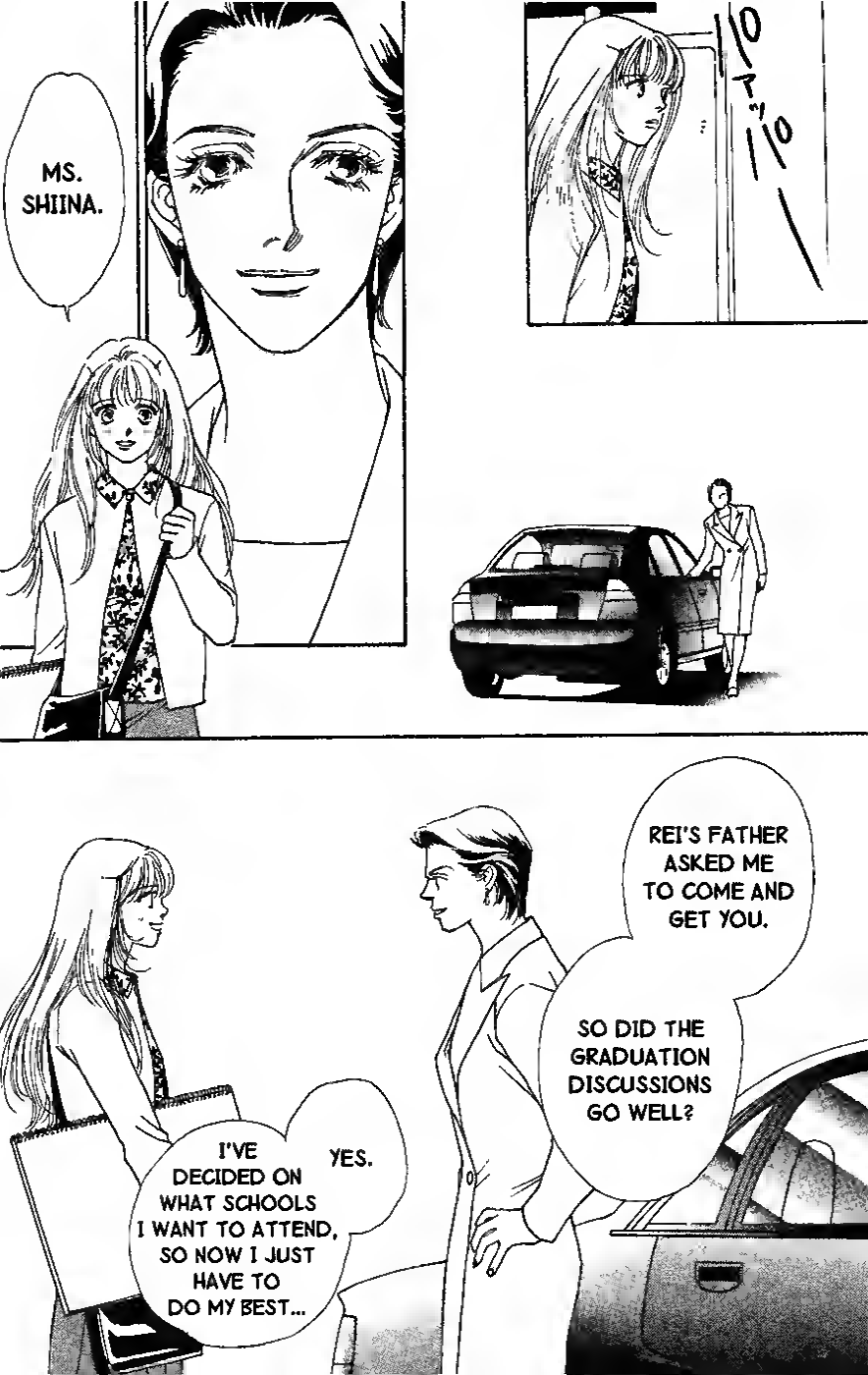
IS HE SERIOUS?

YES, SOME-WHAT...

...TO GO TO COLLEGE AND TAKE OVER THE BUSINESS.

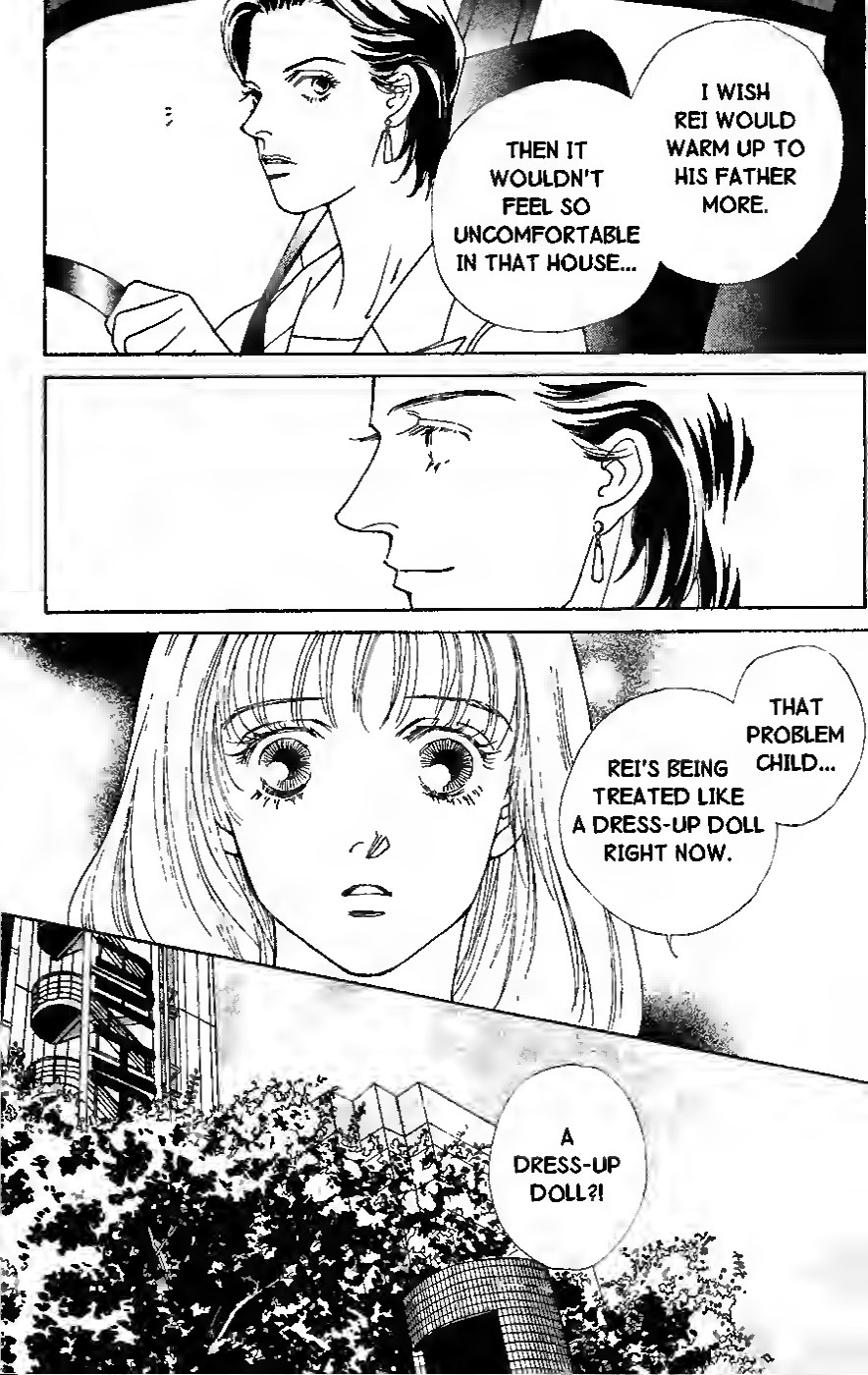
REI...MADE A PROMISE TO HIS FATHER...

REI'S NOT AN ANIMAL.
HE HAS SUCH A WILD QUALITY.
I DON'T KNOW IF THAT'S GOOD OR BAD.
FIRST HE HAS TO TAKE THE COLLEGE EXAM, SO HE'S EVEN HAVING TATSUYA HELP HIM STUDY.
HE'S TRYING IN HIS OWN WAY, BUT...
.....
YOU ONLY HAVE A FEW MONTHS 'TIL THE EXAMS, SO LET'S GET CRACKING.
WELL,


MS. SHIINA.
REI'S FATHER ASKED ME TO COME AND GET YOU.
SO DID THE GRADUATION DISCUSSIONS GO WELL?
YES.
I'VE DECIDED ON WHAT SCHOOLS I WANT TO ATTEND, SO NOW I JUST HAVE TO DO MY BEST...

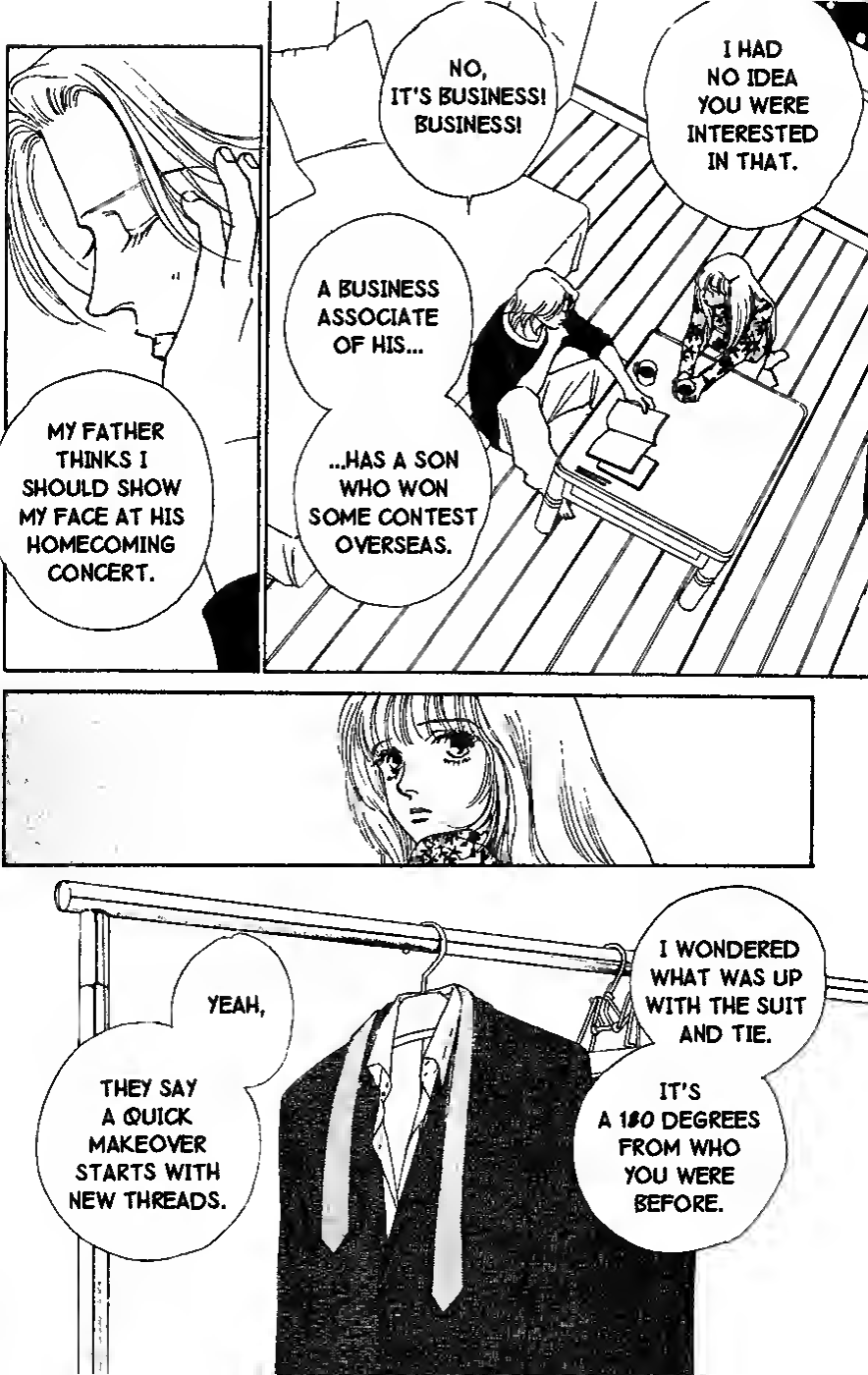
IT FEELS LIKE A DREAM...
...APPLYING FOR ART SCHOOL.
THIS IS ALL BECAUSE OF REI'S FATHER.
IF YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT, THEN YOU SHOULD LIVE WITH HIM.
I HEARD YOU WENT BACK TO THAT CRUMMY APARTMENT AGAIN.
UH, YES...
BECAUSE IT'S NOT LIKE WE'RE MARRIED YET AND...
AND?

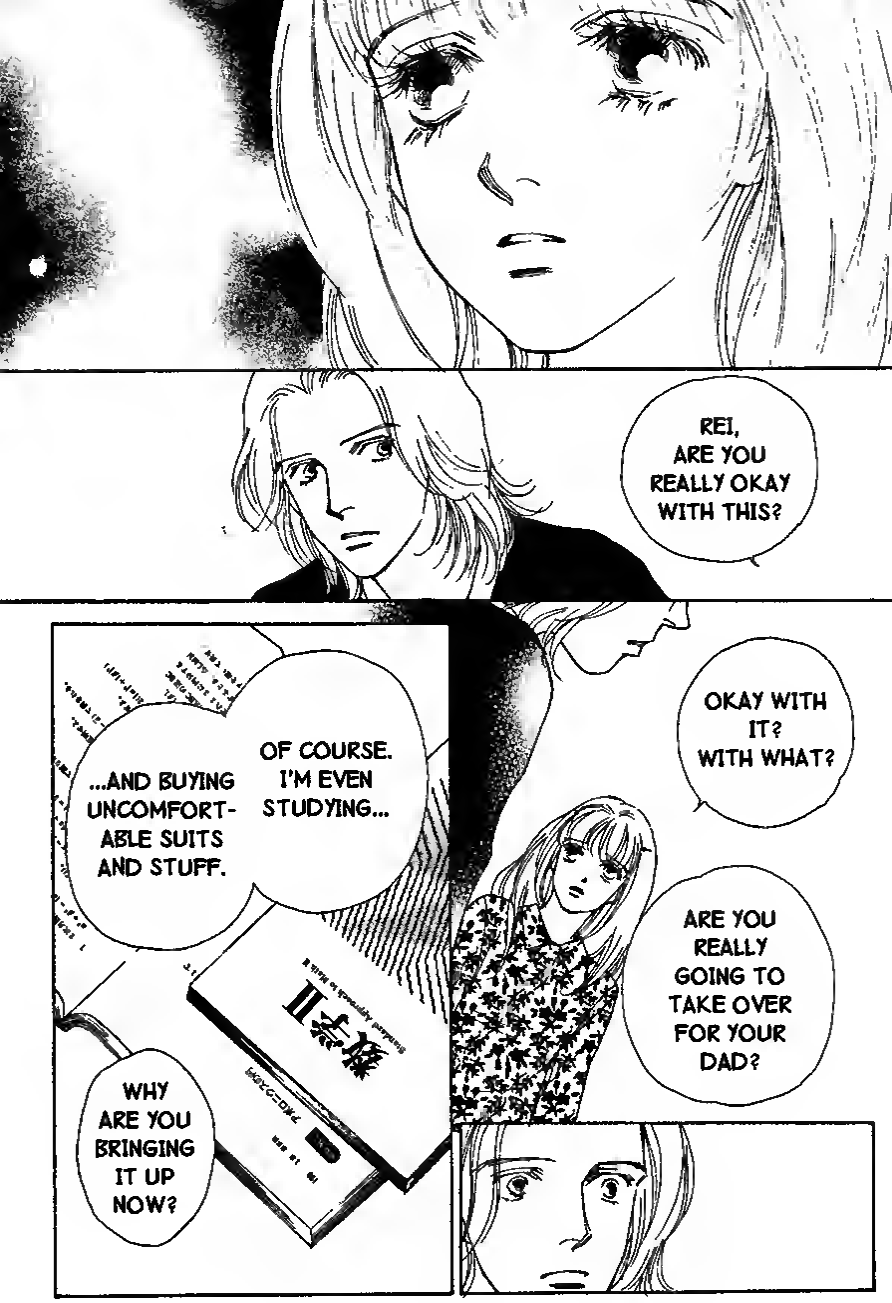
THAT HOUSE IS SO BIG THAT I FEEL LIKE I'LL GET TOTALLY LOST IF I DON'T PAY ATTENTION.
YES, THAT HOUSE IS DEFINITELY TOO BIG.
OH...
...BUT IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S UNCOMFORTABLE OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT.
IT'S ALL RIGHT. YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SO FORMAL.

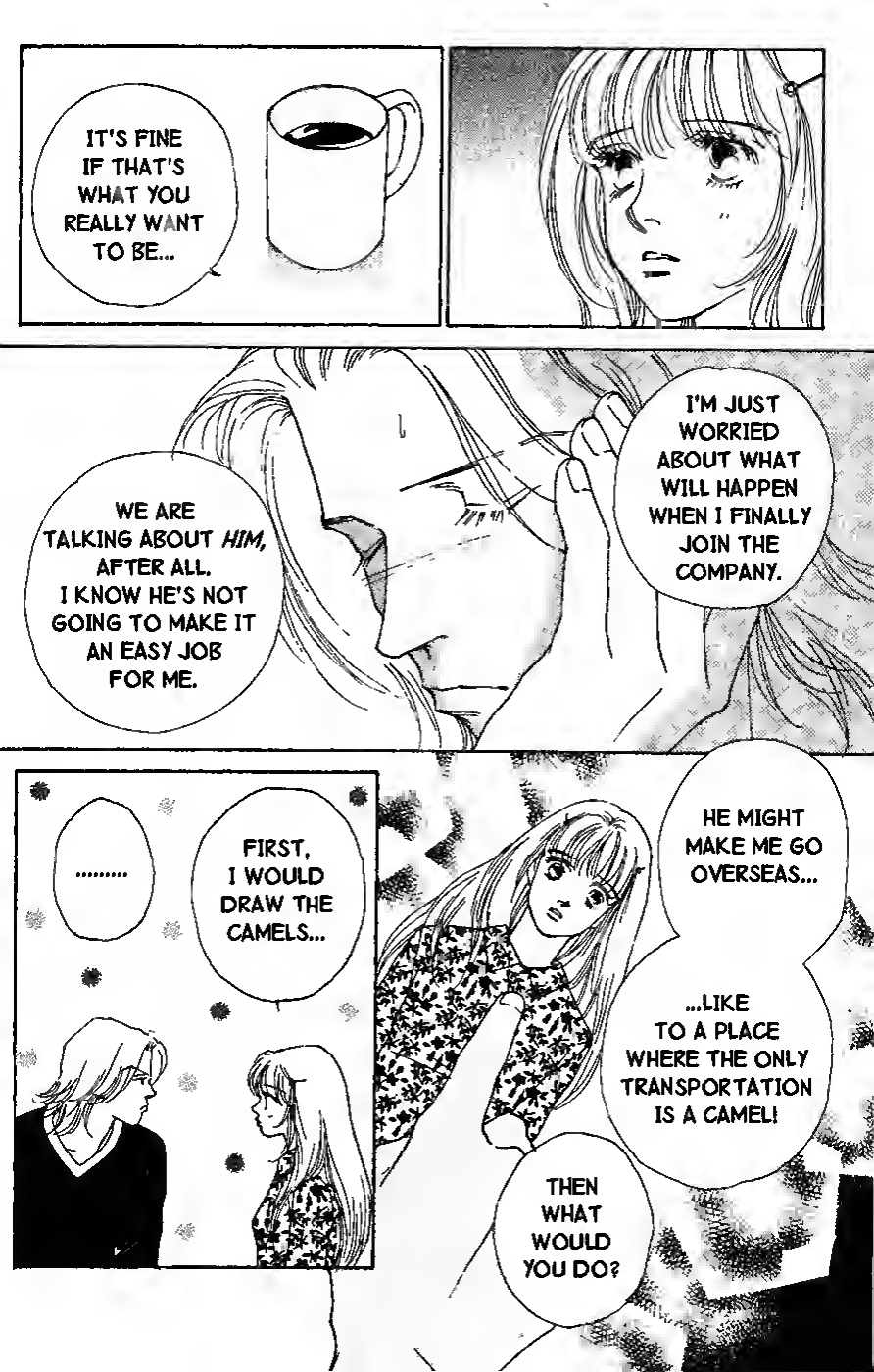

I WISH REI WOULD WARM UP TO HIS FATHER MORE.
THEN IT WOULDN'T FEEL SO UNCOMFORTABLE IN THAT HOUSE...
THAT PROBLEM CHILD...
REI'S BEING TREATED LIKE A DRESS-UP DOLL RIGHT NOW.
A DRESS-UP DOLL?!

SUITS ARE ALL PRETTY MUCH THE SAME.
ARE THERE ANY SUITS THAT AREN'T SO FORMAL?
IT DEPENDS ON HOW YOU WEAR THEM.
WITH YOUR HEIGHT, I THINK YOU CAN ENJOY THEM IN MANY DIFFERENT WAYS.

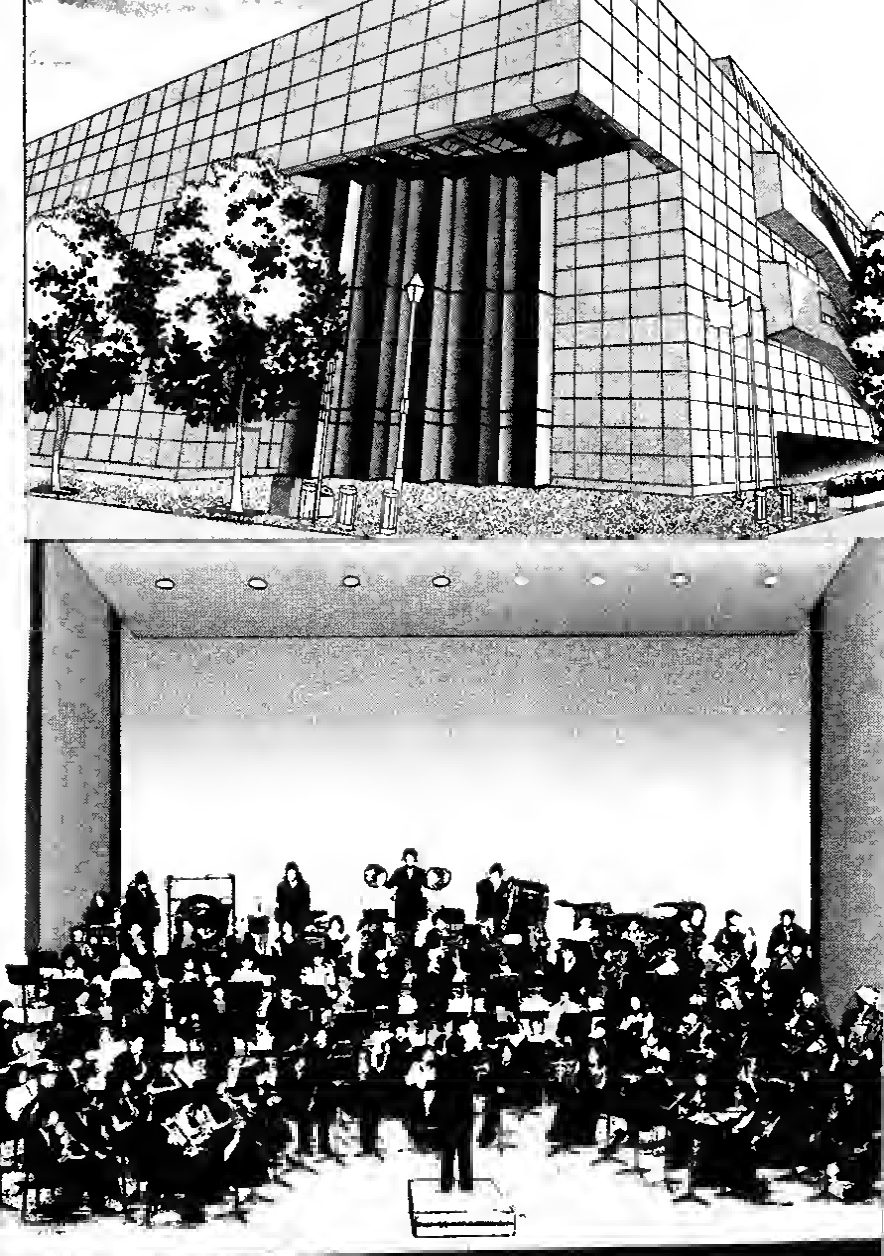
HUH?
WELL, REALLY,
NO MATTER WHAT I WEAR, I LOOK LIKE A HOST AT A BAR.
I'LL TAKE THIS ONE.
OH, IT'S NOTHING.
WHAT?!
YOU'RE GOING TO A...CLASSICAL CONCERT WITH YOUR FATHER?!

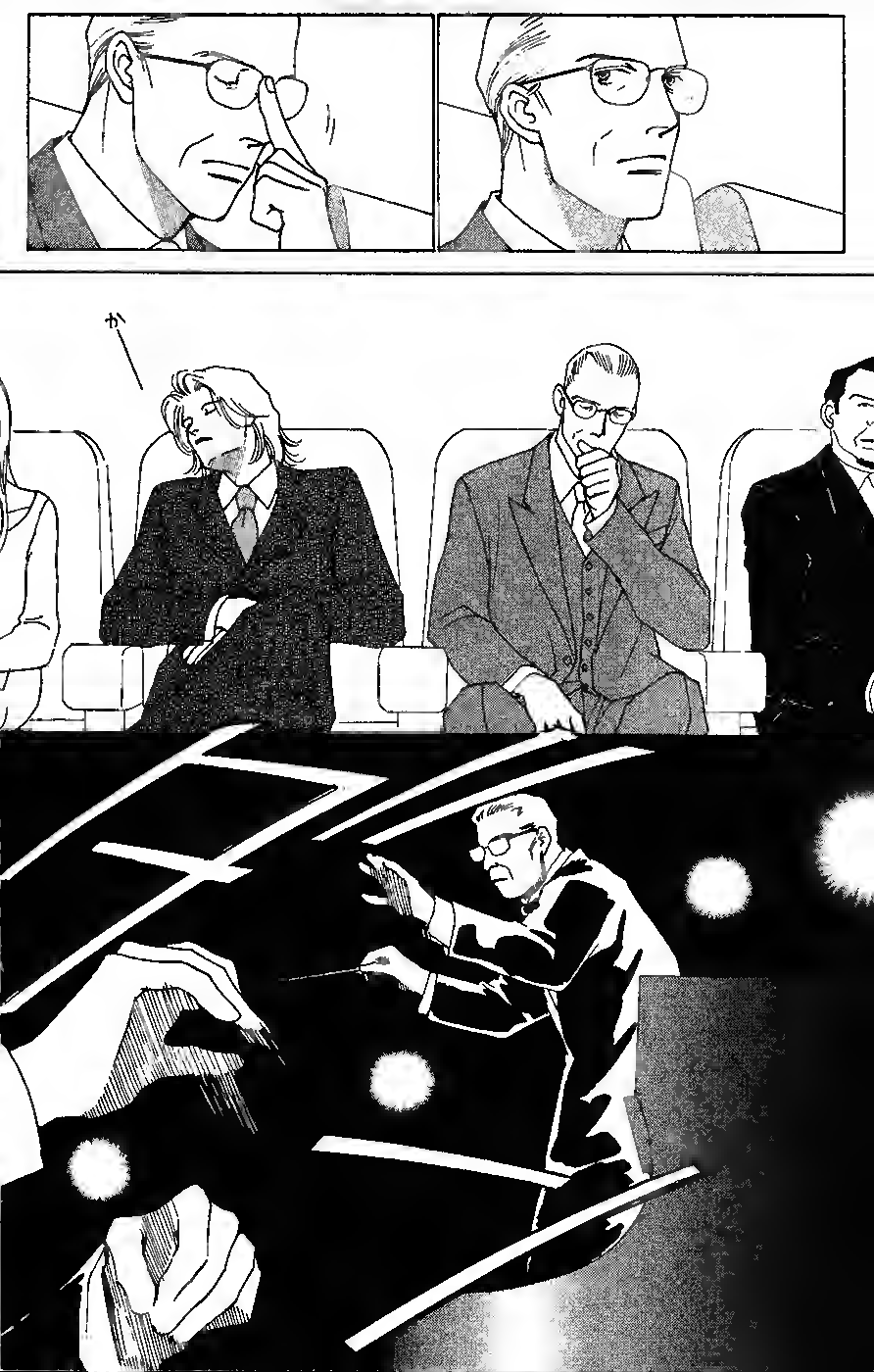

MY FATHER THINKS I SHOULD SHOW MY FACE AT HIS HOMECOMING CONCERT.
NO, IT'S BUSINESS! BUSINESS!
I HAD NO IDEA YOU WERE INTERESTED IN THAT.
A BUSINESS ASSOCIATE OF HIS...
...HAS A SON WHO WON SOME CONTEST OVERSEAS.
YEAH,
THEY SAY A QUICK MAKEOVER STARTS WITH NEW THREADS.
I WONDERED WHAT WAS UP WITH THE SUIT AND TIE.
IT'S A 180 DEGREES FROM WHO YOU WERE BEFORE.


REI, ARE YOU REALLY OKAY WITH THIS?
OKAY WITH IT? WITH WHAT?
ARE YOU REALLY GOING TO TAKE OVER FOR YOUR DAD?
OF COURSE. I'M EVEN STUDYING...
...AND BUYING UNCOMFORTABLE SUITS AND STUFF.
WHY ARE YOU BRINGING IT UP NOW?


IT'S FINE IF THAT'S WHAT YOU REALLY WANT TO BE...
I'M JUST WORRIED ABOUT WHAT WILL HAPPEN WHEN I FINALLY JOIN THE COMPANY.
WE ARE TALKING ABOUT *HIM*, AFTER ALL. I KNOW HE'S NOT GOING TO MAKE IT AN EASY JOB FOR ME.
.....
FIRST, I WOULD DRAW THE CAMELS...
HE MIGHT MAKE ME GO OVERSEAS...
...LIKE TO A PLACE WHERE THE ONLY TRANSPORTATION IS A CAMEL!
THEN WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

I GUESS IT'S ALL ABOUT LOOKING AT THINGS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE.
YEAH.
I GUESS I'LL JUST GO WITH IT FOR NOW.
MY LIFE AS A BUSINESS-MAN...

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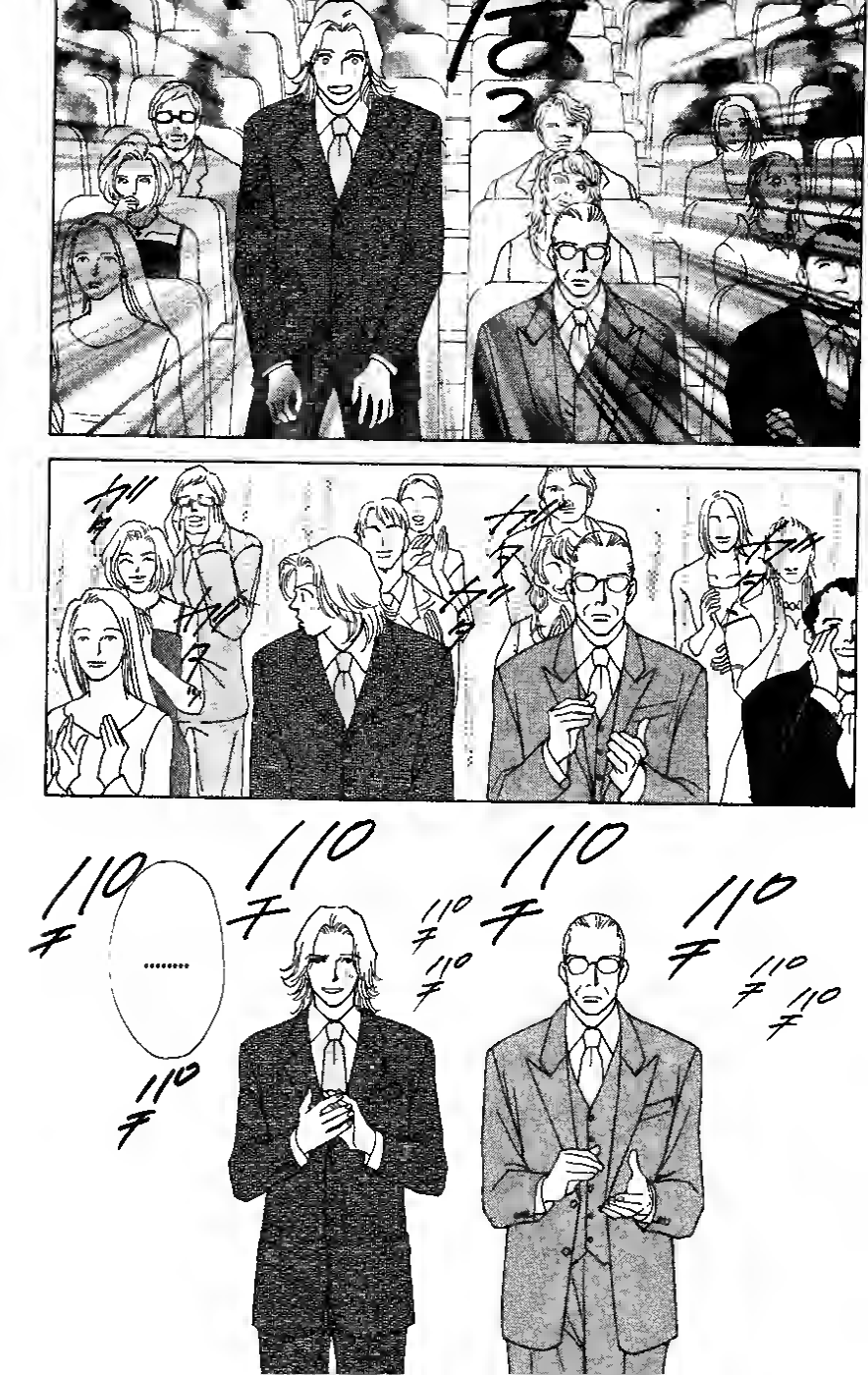
WHOOOA!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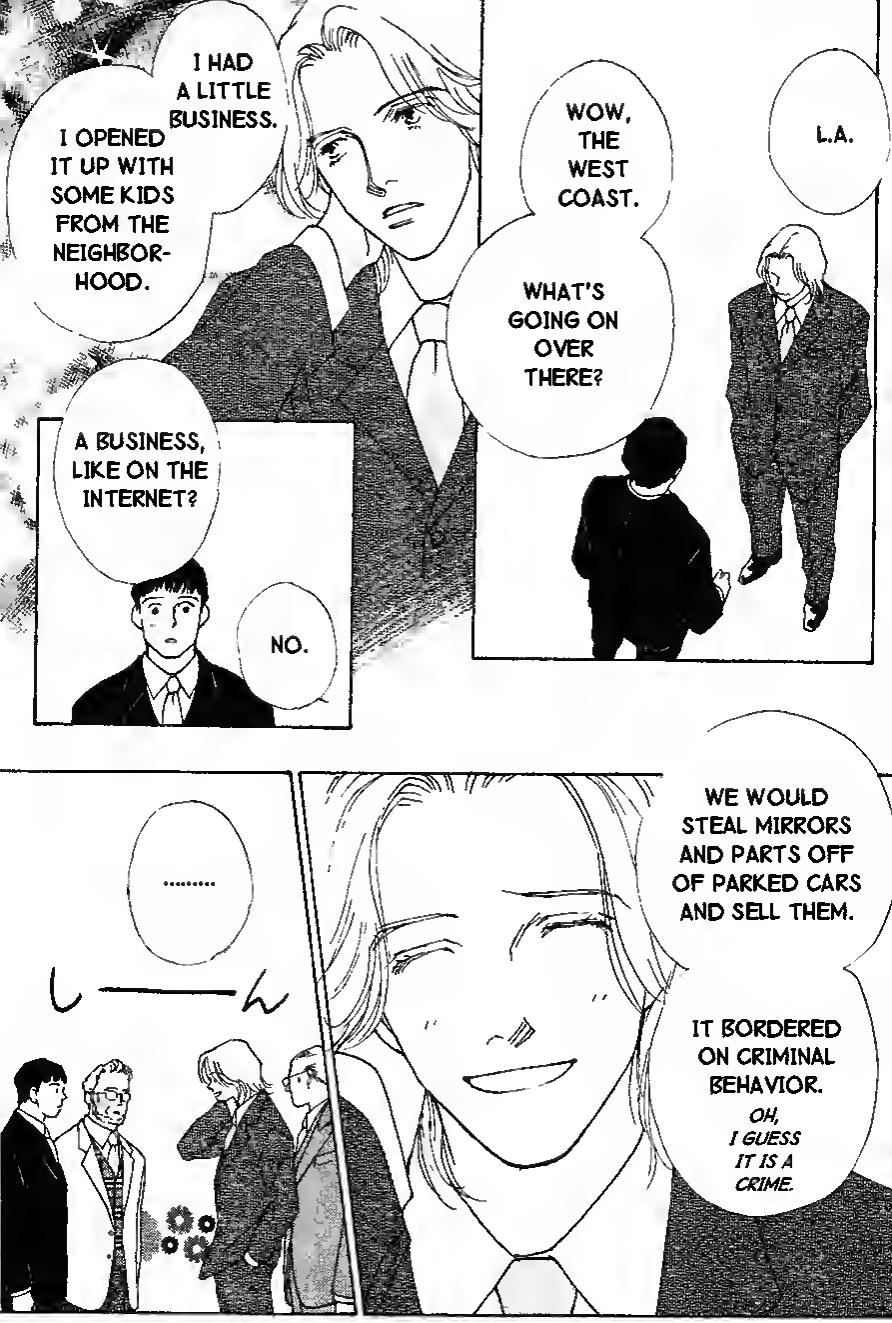
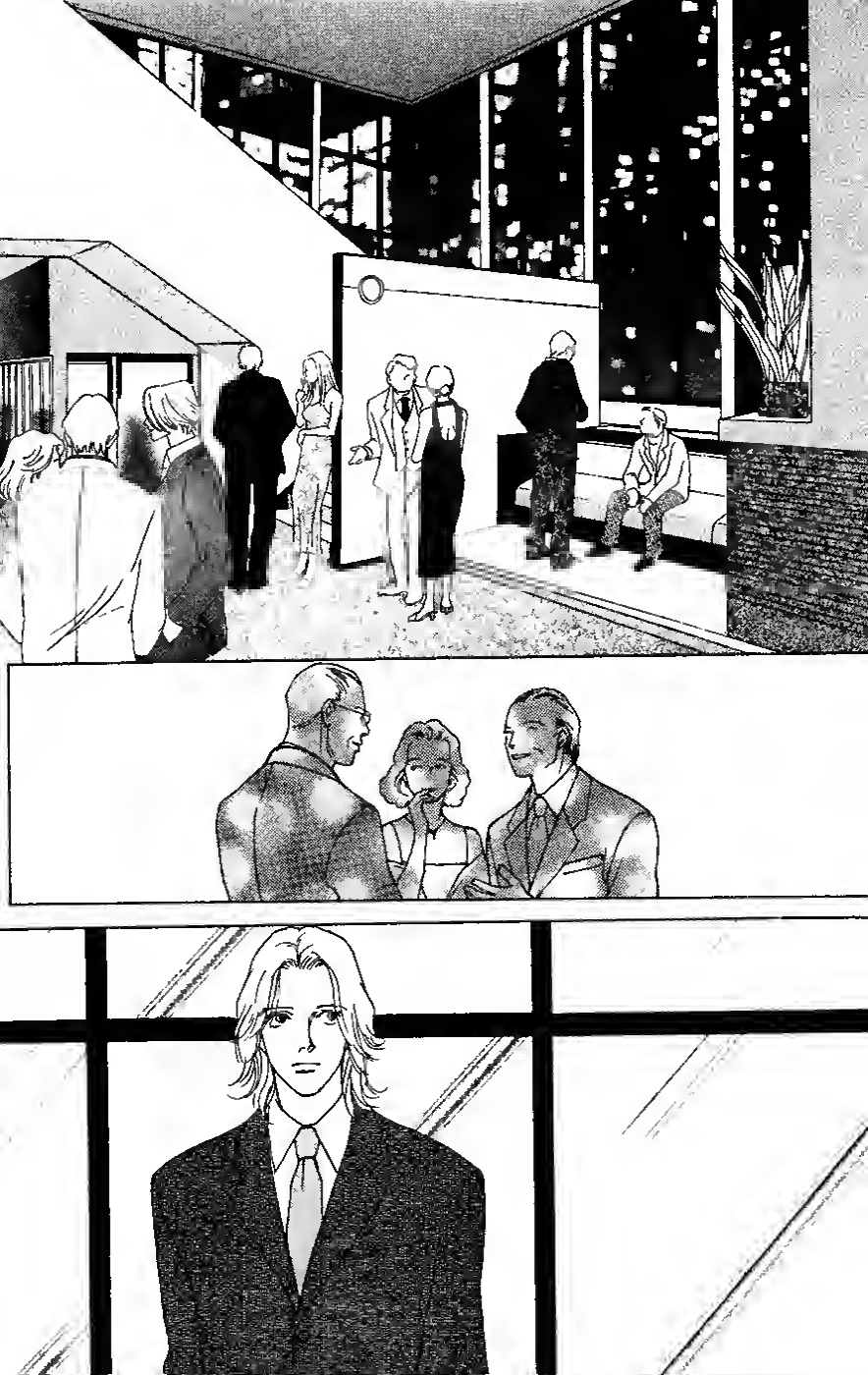
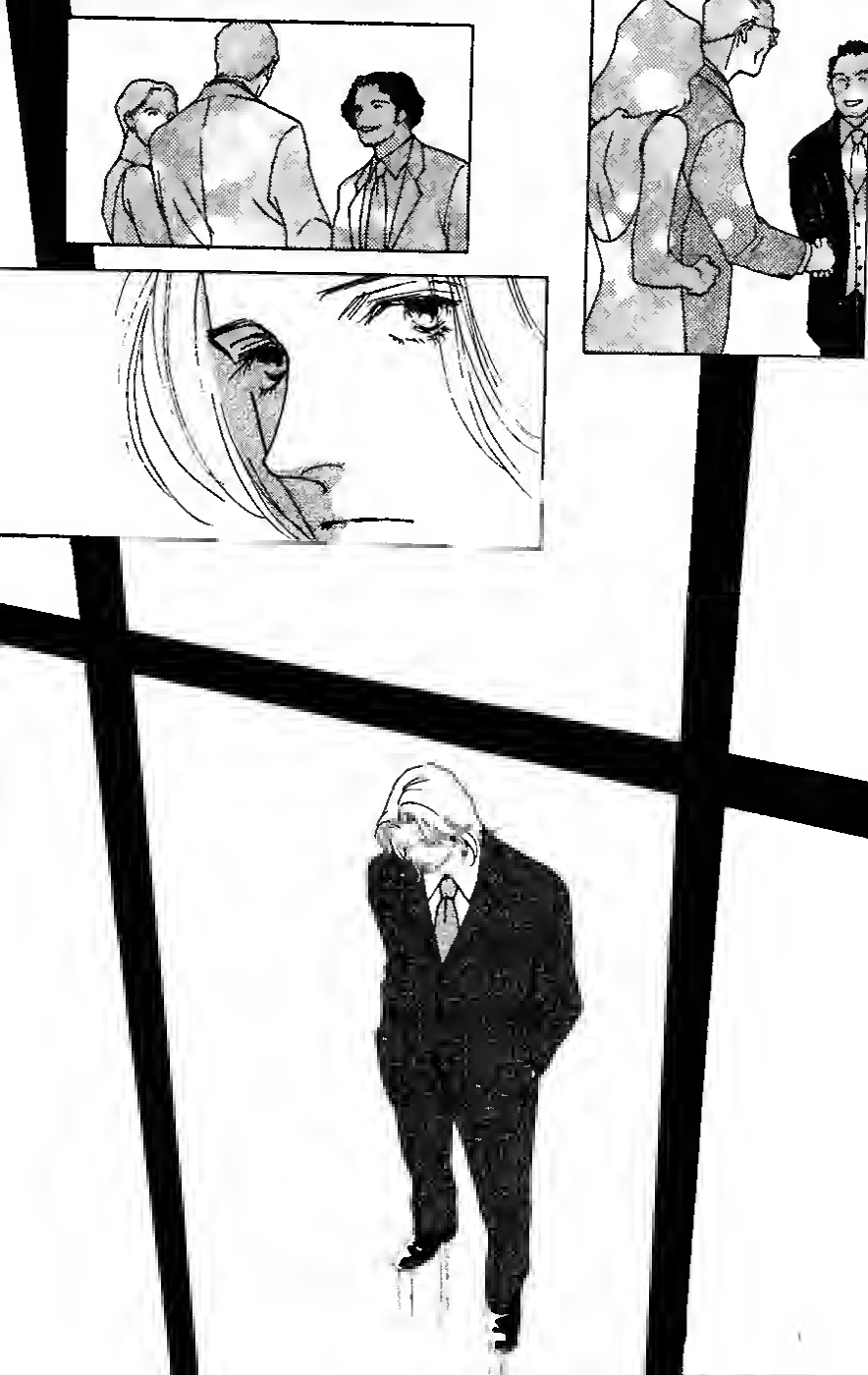
あふー…
REI.
!
かぷっ
COME HERE FOR A MINUTE.
LET ME INTRO-DUCE YOU.
THIS IS MR. KUBO'S SON WHO WON THE TCHAIKOVSKY CONTEST.
NICE TO MEET YOU.
THIS IS MY SON REI.

THAT'S THE THING.
I GOT SLEEPY IN THE MIDDLE AND DIDN'T KNOW WHAT WAS GOING ON.
DID YOU ENJOY THE CONCERT TONIGHT?
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
CONGRATU-LATIONS.
OH!
EX... EXCUSE ME.
NO, NO. IT MEANS MY SON'S PERFORMANCE WAS PLEASANT ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU RELAX.
I GUESS THAT'S A COMPLIMENT, IN A WAY.

HE MEANS DO YOU LIKE THEM?!
WHAT DOES HE MEAN?
DO YOU HAVE AN AFFINITY FOR MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS?
WHAT?
NO, I DON'T HAVE AN AFFINITY FOR ANY INSTRUMENTS.
EXCUSE HIM. MY SON HAS BEEN OVERSEAS FOR A LONG TIME AND HIS JAPANESE ISN'T VERY GOOD.
?
HUH?!
WHERE WERE YOU OVERSEAS, REI?
HA HA. I UNDERSTAND. MY SON WAS STUDYING IN FRANCE FOR A WHILE.


I HAD A LITTLE BUSINESS.
I OPENED IT UP WITH SOME KIDS FROM THE NEIGHBOR-HOOD.
A BUSINESS, LIKE ON THE INTERNET?
NO.
WOW, THE WEST COAST.
L.A.
WHAT'S GOING ON OVER THERE?
.....
しーーん
WE WOULD STEAL MIRRORS AND PARTS OFF OF PARKED CARS AND SELL THEM.
IT BORDERED ON CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR.
OH, I GUESS IT IS A CRIME.



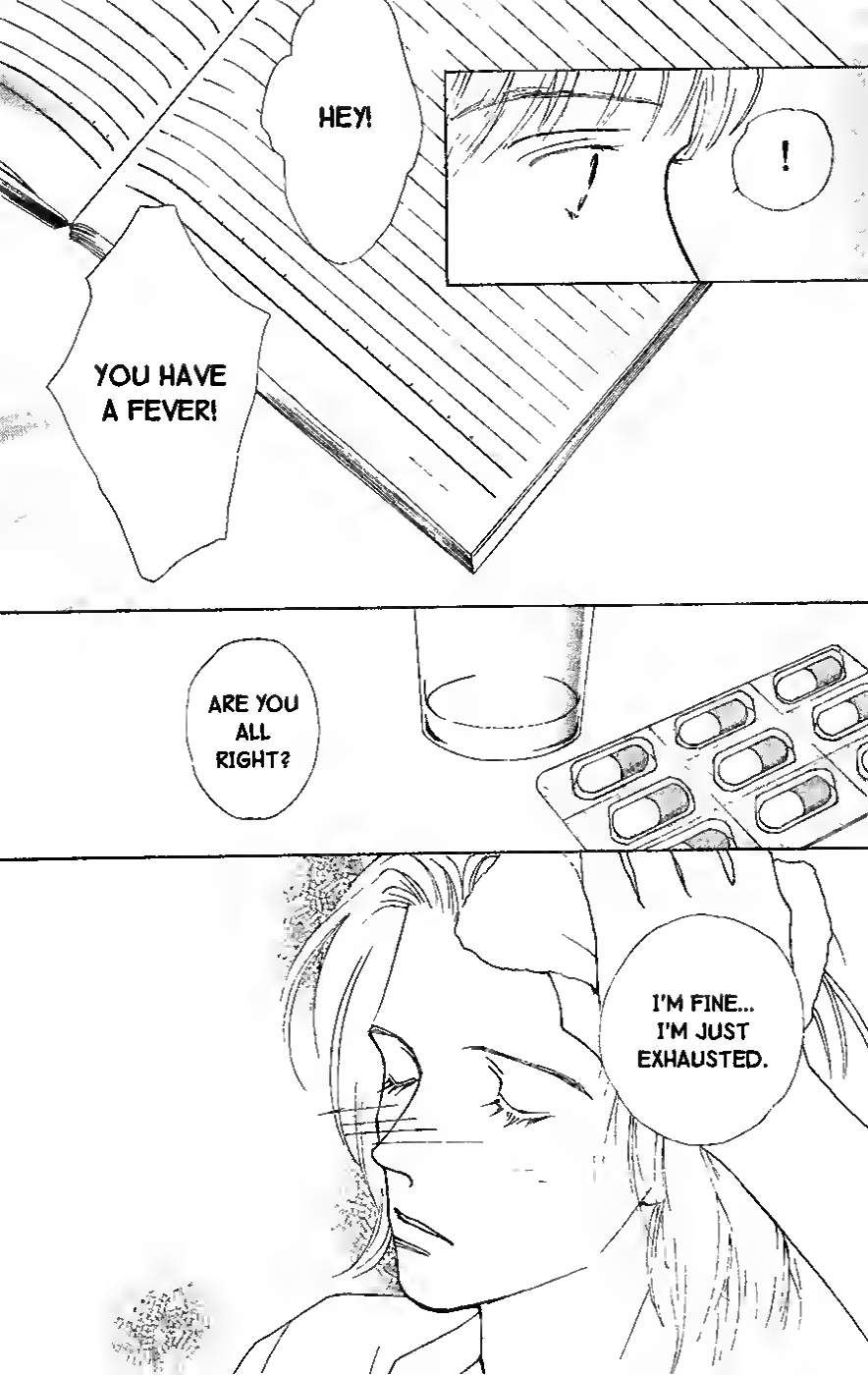


I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
NOT THAT, REI...
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT YOU'RE HELPING ME STUDY EITHER!
...I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'RE THE SON OF THE OAK GROUP PRESIDENT.

THERE'S NO REASON TO HAVE MORE THAN ONE OF THOSE.
...AND COM-PUTERS YOU WANT.
YOU'RE SO LUCKY! YOU CAN GET ALL THE DVDS...
WHAT ABOUT THIS PROBLEM HERE?
THAT'S TRUE, BUT...
BUT WHAT'S EVEN MORE AMAZING IS THAT...
...YOU'RE GOING TO MARRY HIM AND BE A CORPORATE WIFE!
I CAN'T BELIEVE REI'S THE SON OF A CORPORATE MOGUL.

IT'S LIKE A DREAM COME TRUE!
AND WEAR DESIGNER CLOTHES EVERY DAY.
THAT'S SO COOL. YOU'LL GO SHOPPING IN YOUR MERCEDES!
I'M SURE ALL THAT'S NICE, BUT...
...I THOUGHT LIVING HERE WITH REI...
...WOULD BE FUN AND DREAMY.
WHAAT?!
LIVING IN THIS DUMP?

NO, IT'S JUST...
WHAT? THE ANSWER'S WRONG?
SOME-THING ISN'T RIGHT.
GOD, STOP SAYING THAT IT'S A DUMP!
HEY!
...I CAN'T REALLY FOCUS RIGHT NOW.


HEY!
!
YOU HAVE A FEVER!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I'M FINE... I'M JUST EXHAUSTED.

YOU TRY TO DO TOO MUCH ALL AT ONCE.
IT'S FINE. ENGINES NEED TO GET WARMED UP BEFORE RACING.
DON'T COMPARE YOUR BRAIN TO AN ENGINE.
IT'S JUST THAT I HAVEN'T USED IT ENOUGH UNTIL NOW.
A LITTLE OVERWORKING IS NOTHING...

YOU DON'T HOLD BACK, DO YOU?

YOU'RE REALLY STRONG PHYSICALLY, BUT YOU'RE PRETTY WEAK INTELLECTUALLY.

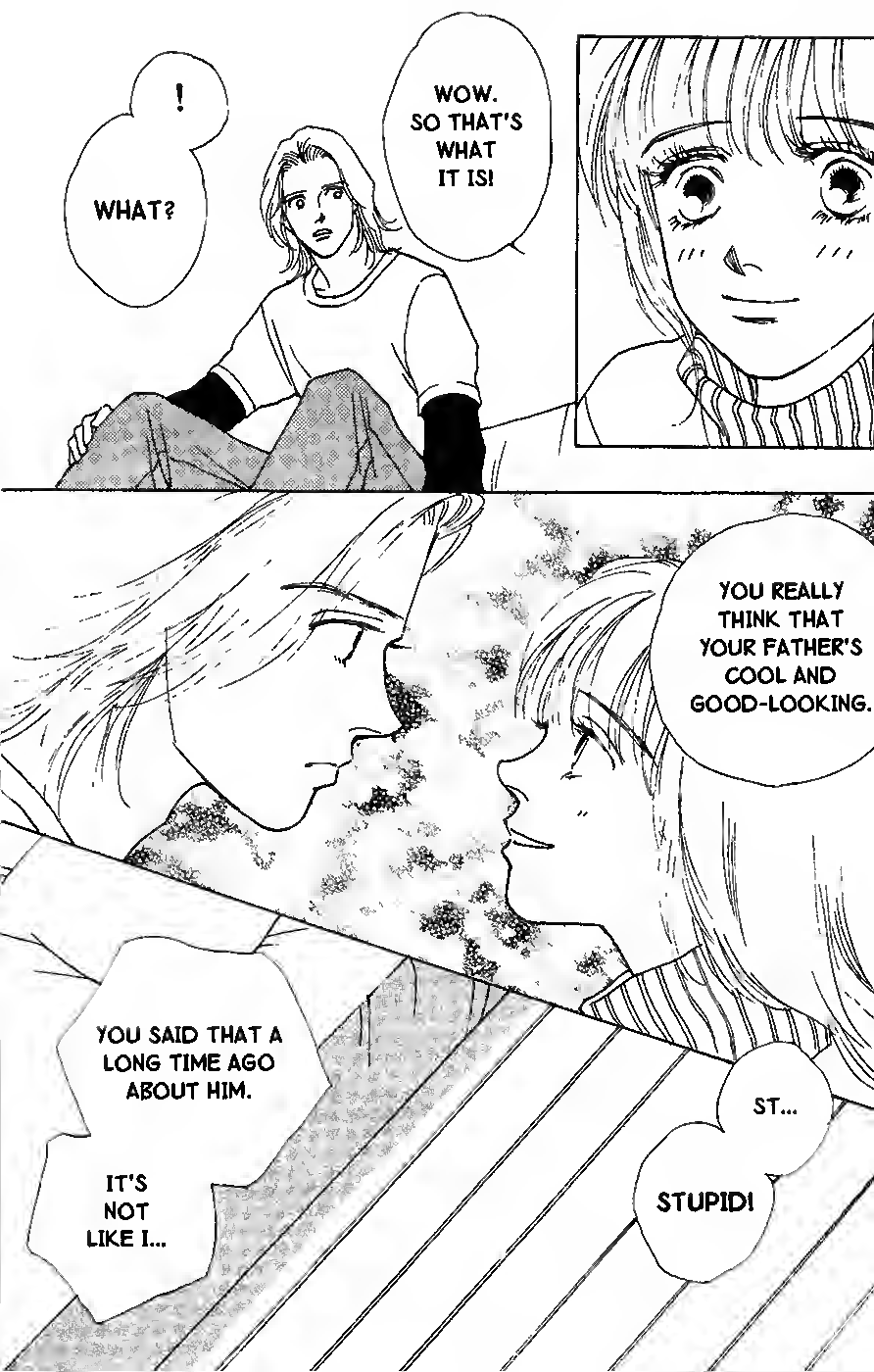
THERE'S NOTHING MY FATHER CAN DO THAT I CAN'T.

WHATEVER YOU SAY, I STILL HAVE KASHINO BLOOD.

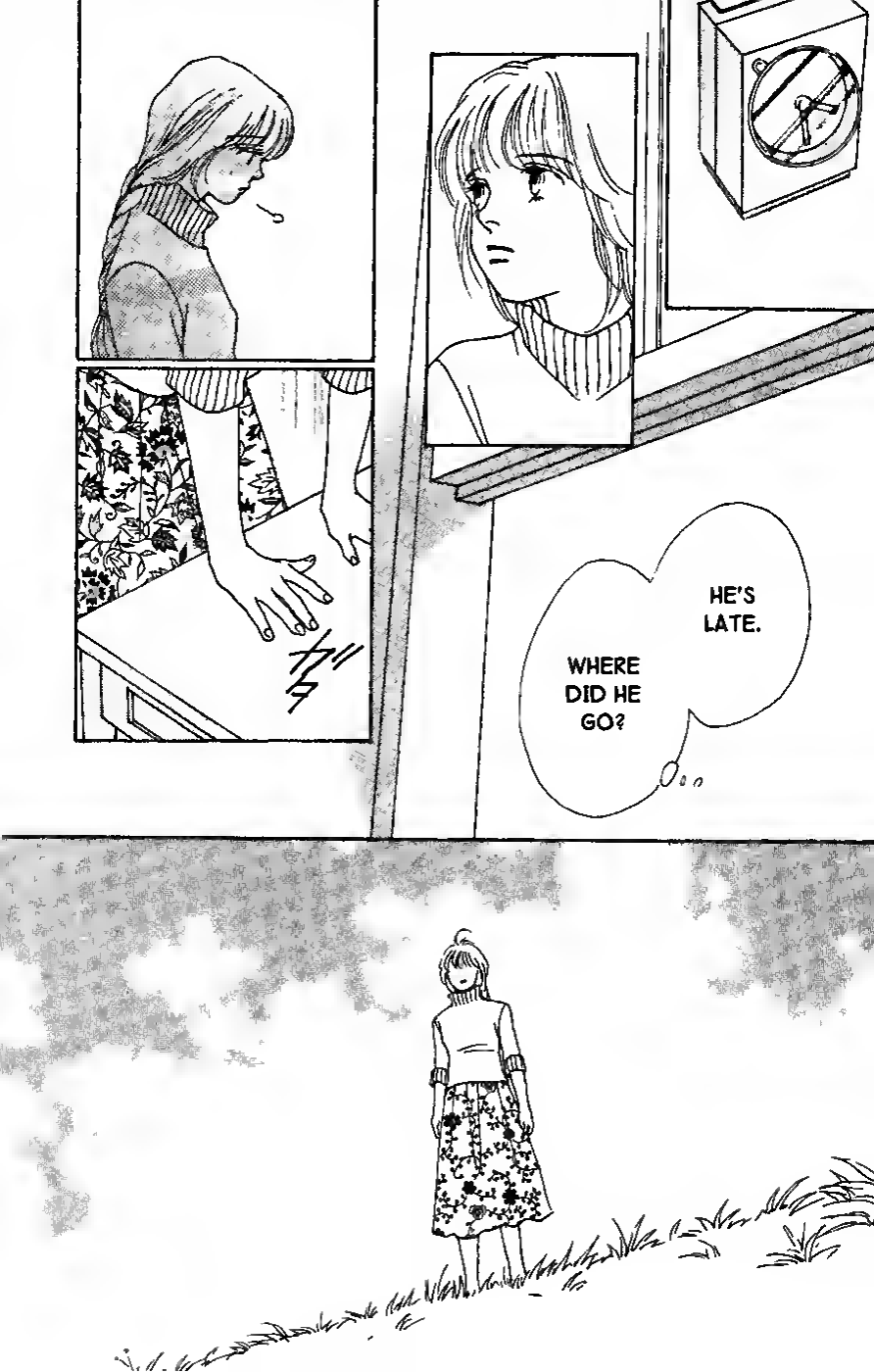
I'M GOING TO BE A COOL AND GOOD-LOOKING OLD MAN.

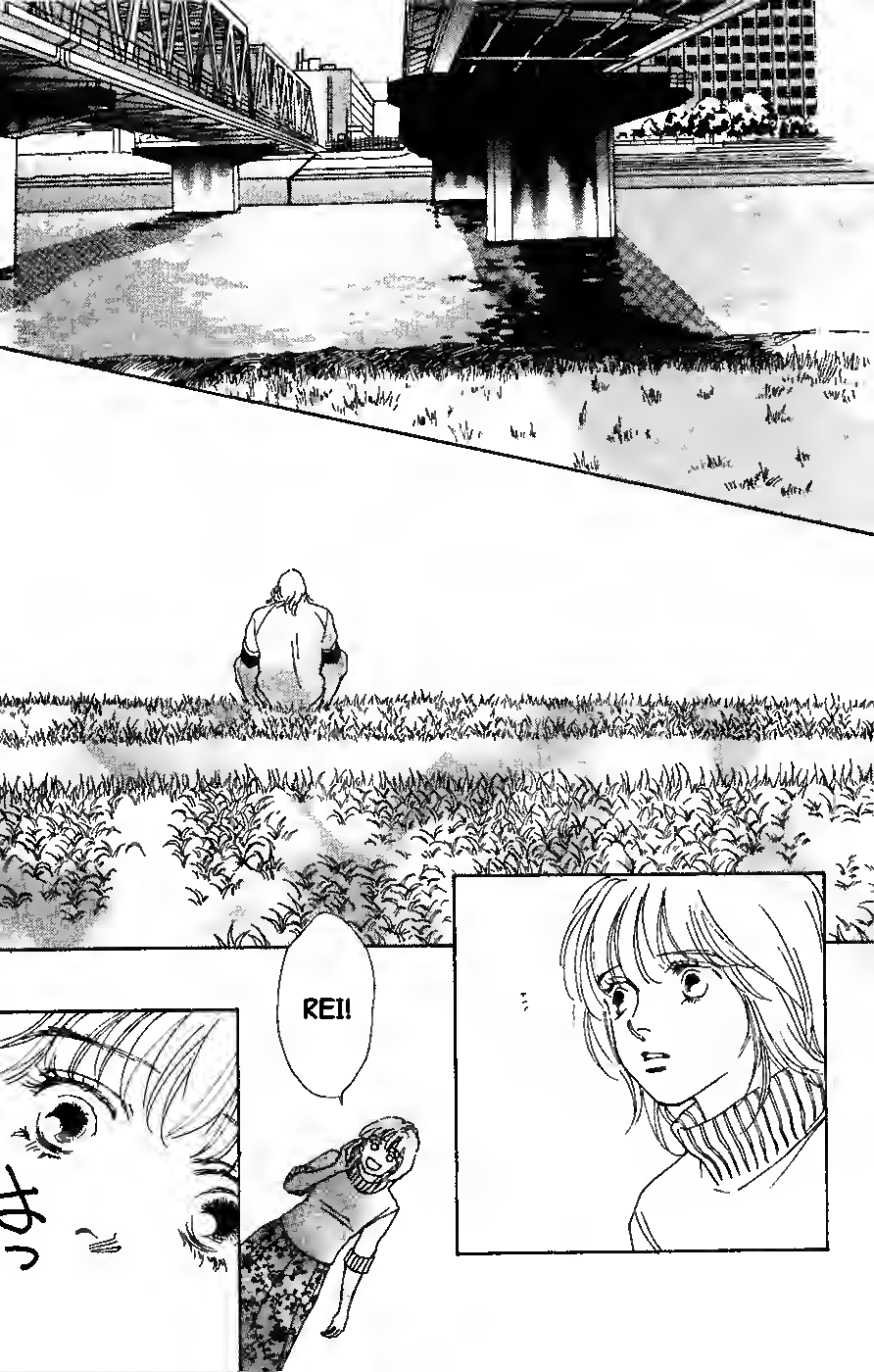
I'LL SOON BE WEARING THREE-PIECE SUITS...

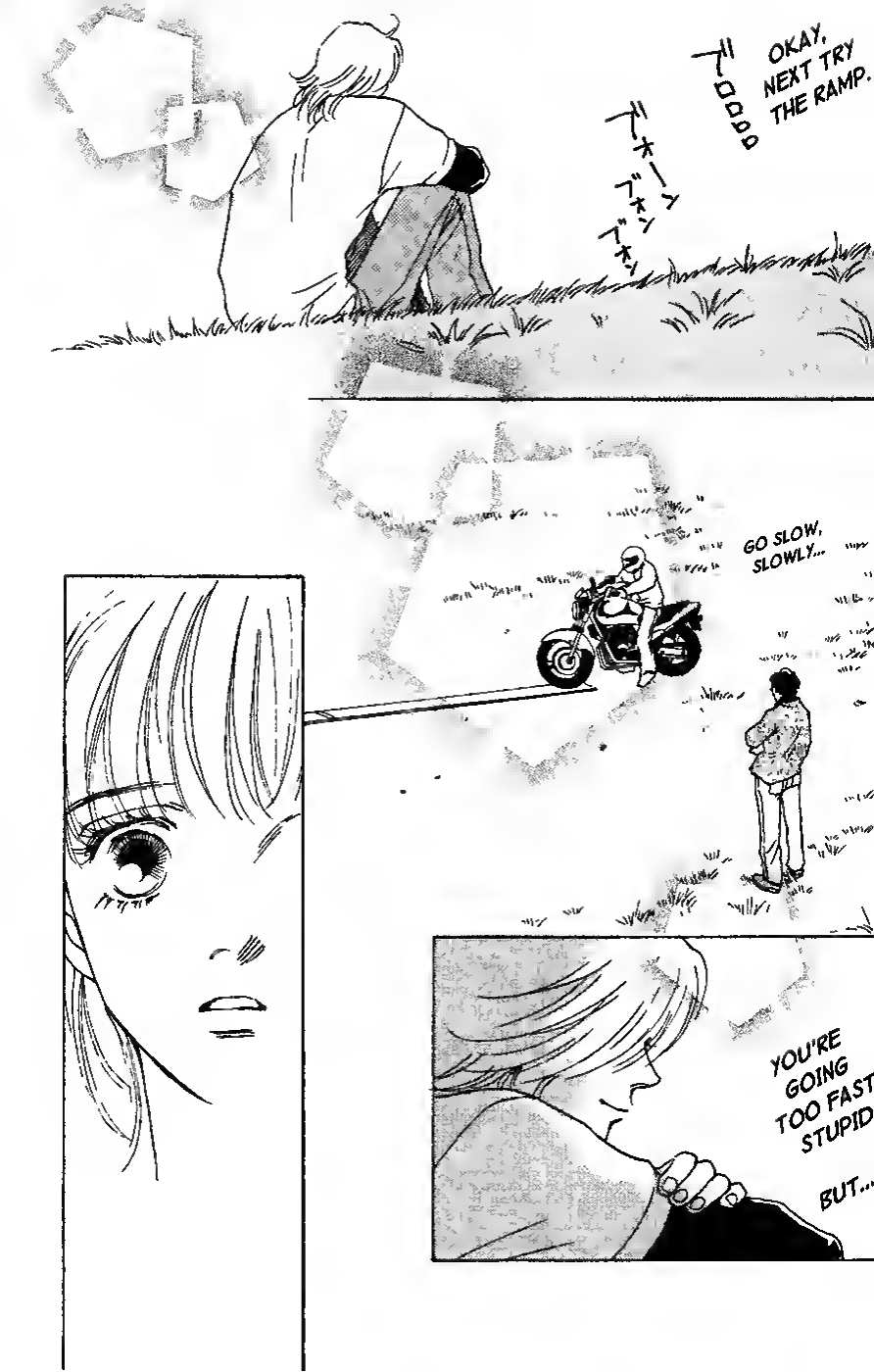
...AND HOLDING MY OWN AGAINST ALL THE BIGWIGS OF THE WORLD.

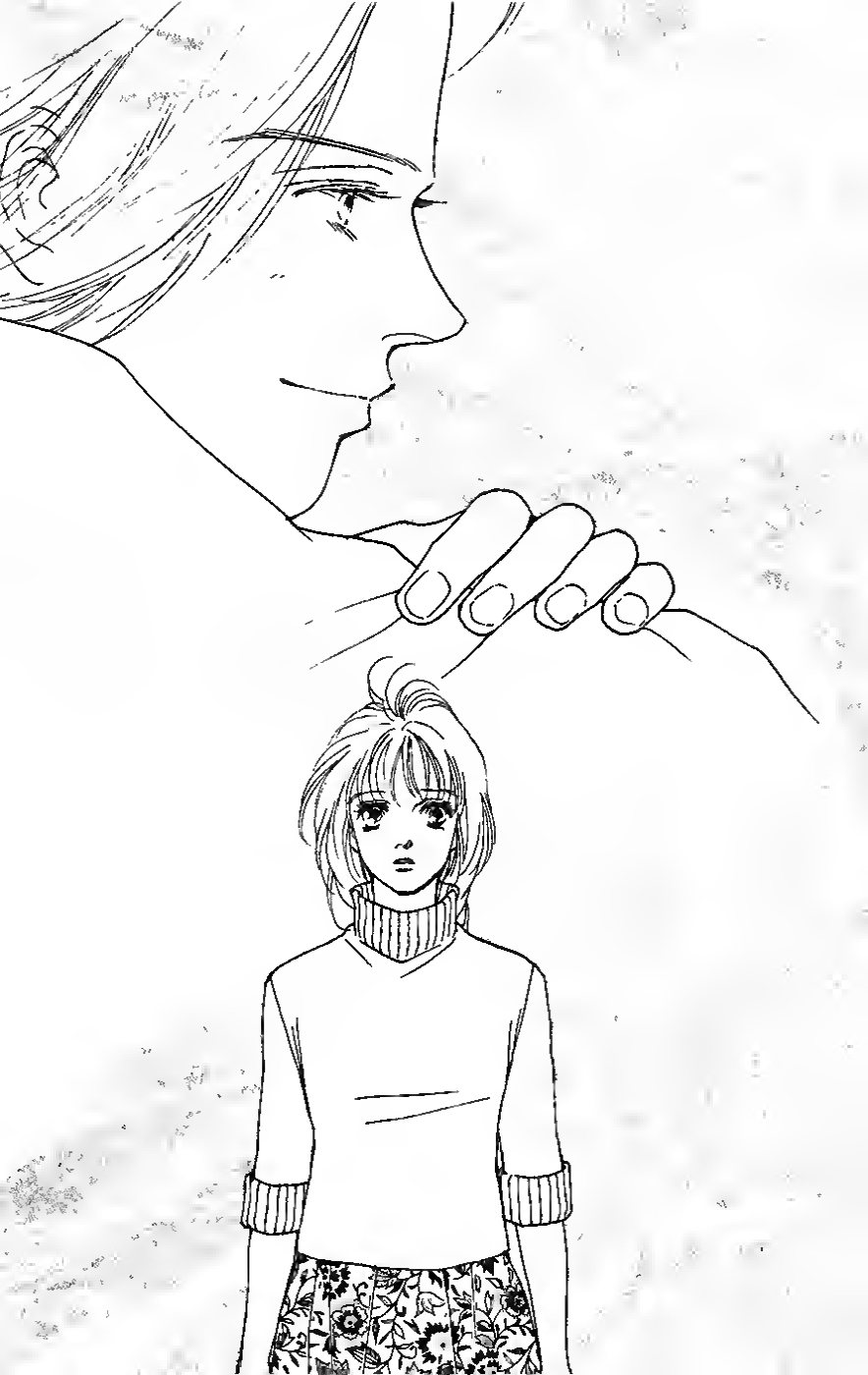

!
WHAT?
WOW. SO THAT'S WHAT IT IS!
YOU REALLY THINK THAT YOUR FATHER'S COOL AND GOOD-LOOKING.
YOU SAID THAT A LONG TIME AGO ABOUT HIM.
IT'S NOT LIKE I...
ST...
STUPID!

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
FORGET IT.
I'M GOING TO THE RIVER TO COOL MY HEAD.


HE'S LATE.
WHERE DID HE GO?


REI!


ブロロロロ
OKAY, NEXT TRY THE RAMP.
ブオーン ブオン ブオン
GO SLOW, SLOWLY...
YOU'RE GOING TOO FAST STUPID
BUT...



STUPID, I TOLD YOU THAT'S TOO FAST!
BUT THE BIKE JUST GOES FORWARD BY ITSELF.
IT'S NOT THE BIKE'S PROBLEM.
YOU'RE THE ONE WITH THE PROBLEM.
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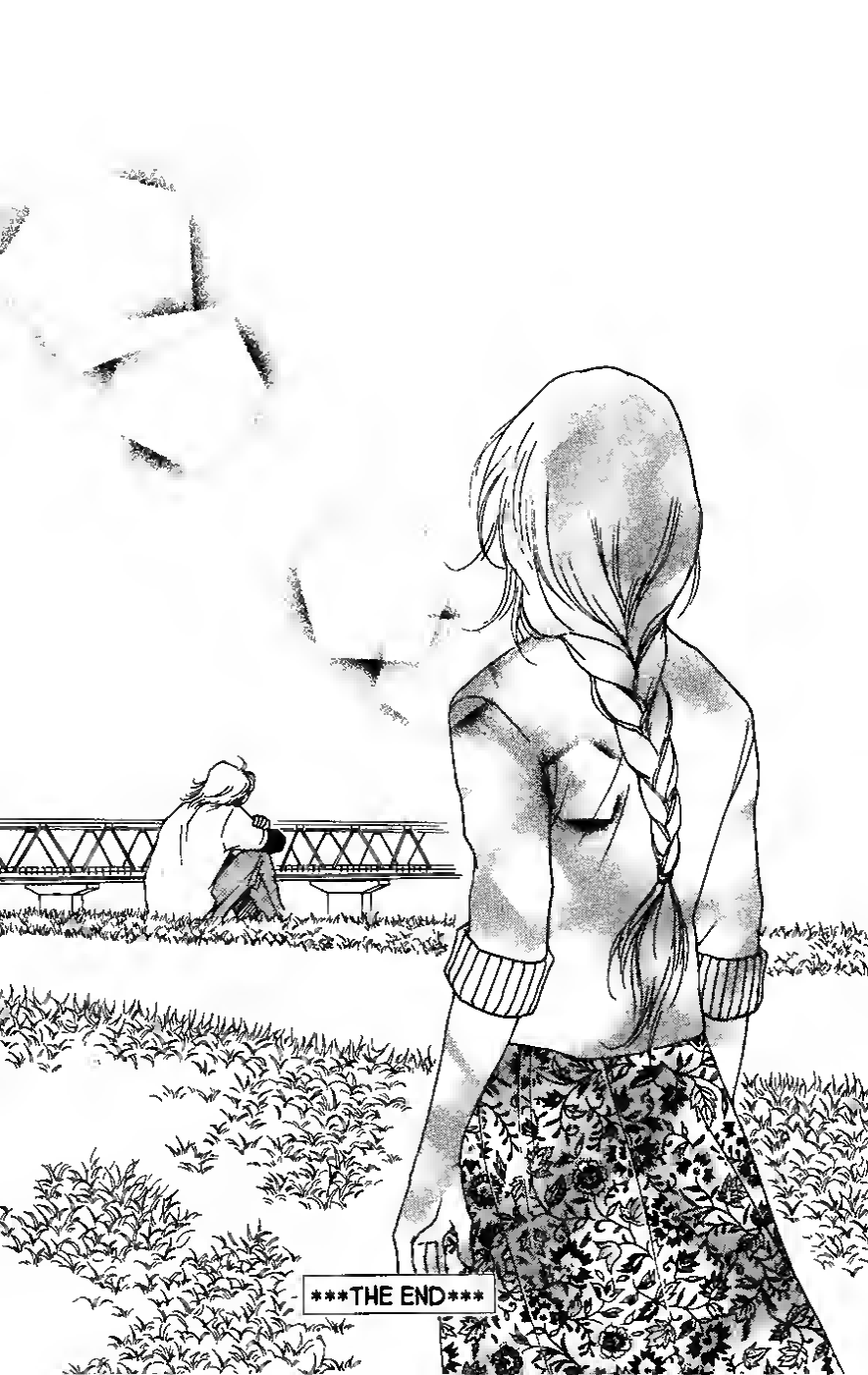
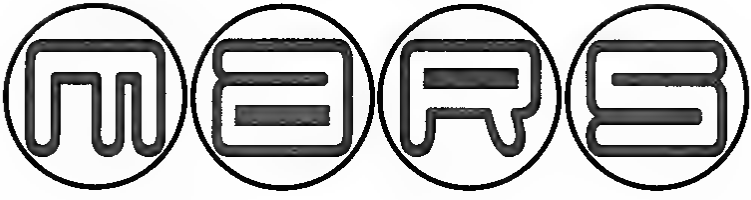

THE END

MARS

Coming Soon...



Volume Fourteen

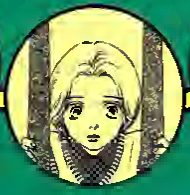
Rei begins his training to become a professional racer and Kira must come to grips with how dangerous the sport really is. There are so many people who have high expectations of Rei, but he performs beautifully under pressure. Kira is pleased that Rei is finally following his true passion in life, but her happiness soon turns to anxiety when she discovers that Masao has been released from the psychiatric center...

Manga/Romance
USA $9 99

Skeletons in the Closet

Rei slowly remembers more ond more events from his childhood. But when Rei tries to tolk to his fother obout his revelotions, he doesn't get the onswers he is seorching for. After doing some investigoting on his own, Rei discovers the truth obout his mother's mentol illness ond the shocking secret behind her mysterious deoth. The complicoted relotionships within Rei's fomily ore brought out into the open os Kiro uneorths some secrets of her own...

An epic romonce thot spons 15 volumes, MARS is one of Jopon's most populor comics for teen girls ever.



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